

A SUMMER'S ADVENTURES: NUMBER III

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A SUMMER'S ADVENTURES.

BY EMILY HUNTINGTON MILLER.

NUMBER III.

BOTH Mattie and I were relieved of a secret fear when it fell to Esther's lot to stay at home the next day. No doubt it was a self-denial to her also, but she did not speak it, and with light-hearted Nell to fill out the trio, we started on our second trip. "See that you do n't idle your time away, Esther, and be sure and have something nice ready for our supper," was Nell's parting charge to Esther.

She would hardly let us share with her the burden of the great market-basket that contained the flowers, and insisted upon adding to its contents whenever she spied a wild rose, or a woodbine, so that we were much longer on the way than we had been the previous day.

"Where shall we go first?" asked Mattie, when we found ourselves once more among the wards.

"To number four," said I, leading the way to the ward we had first entered.

The guard detained Nell a moment at the door to inspect the contents of her basket.

"Nothing but flowers," said she, lifting the dewy things by handfuls; "can I give them to the men?"

"Certainly," was the reply, "it will do them good."

So she laid a little fragrant cluster on the first pillow, saying, with a bright smile, to the grim-looking man who lay there,

"Wild roses—you know how they grow all among the rocks. I found them by the roadside as I came down this morning."

And she passed on to give the next man a branch of laurel with its waxy buds half hidden in glossy-green leaves. He gazed upon it with an admiring look, saying:

"Ah, yes; that's the wild laurel. I've gathered it many a time when I was a boy on the hills behind my father's house. I used to think it was a fine sight when the bushes were all covered with bloom; finer than any garden."

"The woods are full of it," said Nell; "I gathered this yesterday, and I could n't help wishing I could take up an acre of it, rocks, and trees, and all, and bring it down here to show to you all."

So she went on, scattering her flowers right and left, and chattering about them all the time, till she reached the door at the other end and passed out, leaving smiles upon many faces that had not been so brightened in a long time. Mattie and I found, as we expected, an empty

bed where our soldier boy had lain when we left him, and learned that he died about sunset without speaking again, only, just as he was going, he whispered faintly,

"Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

"He will be buried this afternoon," said the doctor, "with two others who died last night. If you would like to see a military funeral, come up to my tent at three o'clock, and my wife will go with you."

He pointed out to us the rough wooden structure he called his tent, and left us to find our work. There was work enough waiting for us, and one of the nurses, the first woman we had seen in the wards, carried Mattie off to assist her, while I went into one of the surgical wards.

I was reading the morning paper to some of the men when the surgeon-in-chief came hastily up to me.

"Where is the other one," he asked abruptly; "the young woman that talks without smiling?"

I knew he meant Esther, so I said simply, "She is at home to-day."

"Just when I wanted her; I never could depend on a young woman," said he with a touch of impatience in his tone. He turned away, then wheeling suddenly around he looked me sharply in the face, saying,

"I wonder if you are good for any thing—do you ever faint away—do you have hysterics?"

Perhaps there was a shade of vexation in my heart at that instant; but I am sure he did not suspect it. I sat quietly under his inspiration, only saying in answer to his questions,

"If I can do any good you may depend upon me."

"I think I can," said he more gently; "come into the next ward with me."

I followed him to the door, where he paused and said,

"There is a fellow in there that I can do nothing with. He is badly shot in his chest; they sent him up from one of the field hospitals, and I do n't think the bullet has ever been taken out. I tried for it once without finding it, and the trouble is the man is so afraid of the probe; makes more fuss than he would at a bayonet. I can't give him chloroform, his lungs are so shattered, and I must find that ball. Now I want you to go and talk to him, and try to cheer him up. Talk about any thing but his wound; make him forget that if you can. He is just lying there in a perfect fever of dread, waiting for my coming. It is n't an unusual thing at all. The bravest soldiers in a fight often make the most fuss at having their wounds dressed."

We were just going in when he stopped and said, "You had better go alone; it's the fourth bed, right-hand side." Then, looking me full in the face, he said, "If he wants you to stay while I dress his wound will you do it?"

I hardly knew what I was saying, but I answered at once that I would stay.

I saw the man as soon as I entered the door, raised high upon pillows, and watching every comer with a nervous interest. He breathed with difficulty, and returned my greetings in a voice a little above a whisper.

"I thought you would like to hear the news," said I, drawing the morning paper from my pocket; "it begins to look as if we should have Richmond soon."

His face put on a look of pleasure, and he listened with evident interest to the hopeful reports that were just then exciting the public, with the belief that McClellan's campaign was about to prove a success. From that I went to a lively Saratoga letter, detailing in a spicy manner the ludicrous mishaps of a couple of pompous lieutenants, who undertook to make themselves the lions of the watering-place. He had hardly breath enough to afford the luxury of laughing, but I laughed for him, and it was plain he was thoroughly diverted, when I saw the surgeon coming with his two assistants. The look of misery that came over his face was pitiful to see, and in an instant all my own fear was gone, and I felt strong enough to help him.

"Do n't think about it," I said quickly, as an exclamation of dread escaped his lips; "it will be over soon, and I know you are brave enough to bear it. Would you like to have me stay with you?"

"If you only would," said he with a grateful look; "I do n't believe I shall be such a coward before a woman."

I talked to him incessantly, as much to divert my own mind as his, and though he evidently suffered greatly, only once did a groan escape his lips. It was not a lengthy operation, and very soon the surgeon held up a ragged bit of iron, saying, "I thought so: they must have sent you this along with your bullet; you're all right now, my man."

Then nodding his head at me he said,

"You'll do; you're a brave little woman; I should like to shake hands with you if I could. Now see that this man has a bowl of sago and goes to sleep."

I hurried to the little pantry of the nurse and repeated the doctor's orders, and was glad when the man there directed me to the kitchen where special diet was prepared. It was a

relief to be for a moment under the happy blue sky, and feel the terrible strain upon my nerves relaxed. By the time I got my bowl of sago it was all over, and I went back very calmly to find my patient lying quietly, with clean bandages over the ugly wound.

He thanked me most gratefully for the nourishment and for staying with him.

"You would not believe," said he, "how foolish I was about it. I would rather have faced a battery, but I am so glad it is over at last."

Mattie and I found each other readily at noon, but Nell was no where to be found. At last, after we had resolved to eat our dinner independently of her ladyship, we stumbled upon her sitting on a box outside of the wards, surrounded by a group of convalescents who were just able to crawl from their beds into the sunshine. She was relating to them, in the most animated style, the story of Horatius with his two comrades, and the men were listening as if entranced.

She pictured in vivid light the gathering of bands of Tuscans against Rome, and the dismay that was spread through the city at the news; how, as the invaders came on, burning villages and laying the land waste, the frightened people fled in crowds to Rome, till at last the armed host with the banners of "twelve proud cities" drew near the banks of the Tiber. There was but one hope for Rome, and that was to destroy the bridge, and there was not time to do the work before the foe would be upon them.

The excitement among the listeners grew visibly greater as she told how "brave Horatius" stepped forth with his noble offer to stand with two others in the narrow path, where a "thousand might well be stopped by three," and keep them at bay till the bridge went down. It was curious to see the play of feeling upon the faces of the group at the story of that terrible conflict of three against an armed host, and when at last, with a crash like thunder, the bridge went plunging into the Tiber, "and to the highest turret-tops was splashed the yellow foam," they broke out with a spontaneous cheer.

Then Nell, leaving her narration, repeated the rest of the story in the words of Macaulay's noble poem, standing up as she told at last how,

"In the nights of Winter,
When the cold north winds blow,
And the long howling of the wolves
Is heard amid the snow;
When the goodman mends his armor,
And trims his helmet's plume;
And the goodwife's shuttle merrily
Goes flashing through the loom;

With weeping and with laughter
Still is the story told,
How well Horatius kept the bridge
In the brave days of old."

Those poor crippled fellows, listening upon the grass to the old Roman legend, seemed stirred as if by the sound of a trumpet, and Mattie and I shared not a little in their interest, thinking the story had never been half appreciated by us before. Just as we were turning away from the group, however, one of them scattered our poetical fancies completely by remarking,

"I'm thinking it was a lucky thing for that Horatius that folks did n't carry Minnie rifles in them days. 'T would n't have taken long to pop him over."

Sure enough; and there was the contrast between ancient and modern warfare—the clumsy spear and battle-ax, and the rifle with its long range and unerring aim.

"I've seen 'Johnny,'" said Nell, as we sat eating our dinner; "he's one of the surgeons. I knew him in a minute from the picture his mother showed us, and so I introduced myself; told him we spent the Sabbath at his home, and that his father brought us down. He seemed quite relieved to see me; said his father told him about us, and I am inclined to think, from his manner, that he was afraid the old gentleman had been imposed upon, or else was going crazy."

At three o'clock we presented ourselves to the doctor's wife, who received us very graciously. By her advice we did not go to the chapel where religious services were to be held, and which was already filled by the soldiers, but walked with her through the grove to the little cemetery on the outskirts of the grounds. There was a broad carriage path leading to it, carpeted so completely by the fallen leaves of the tall pines, that our steps gave back no sound. The road wound gracefully among the trees, and sweeping around a group of noble oaks divided into two branches at the corner of the cemetery, which was inclosed by a white paling. The graves were ranged in long rows, uniformly turfed, and marked at the head by a board bearing the name, age, residence, etc., of the deceased soldier. It was strange and sad, as we walked among them, to see how the sleepers had come from almost every section of the land, and how their ages varied from mere boyhood to middle age. There was but one grave of them all that bore any inscription, aside from what was necessary for identification. For that one some loving hand had written,

"Beloved in life, in memory cherished."

The three graves that were to receive the dead were the last of a new row. The sexton had prepared them with great taste, by placing bunches of wild flowers at the head, and completely hiding the bare sides by a lining of sweet-fern branches.

"Does he always do this?" I asked in surprise.

"Always," said the doctor's wife, "in Summer; friend and foe are served alike, but you see we have very few rebels buried here."

Soon the distant music of the band announced that the chapel services were over and the procession on its way. Slowly it wound along, coming into view for a moment, and then disappearing among the trees, the band all the time breathing out the sad, sweet strains of Mount Vernon. Nearer and nearer they came, the three coffins side by side in an open wagon, covered by the national banner, while the little guard of twelve men marched, with arms reversed, six on each side. And what a sad procession! Swinging upon crutches, leaning on the arm of a comrade, limping wearily along the way; there were haggard faces, wasted and mutilated forms, and every mark of wounds and sickness, but among them all not one able-bodied man. They were the invalids and convalescents—men who had just escaped death themselves; but I could not help thinking, as I looked upon them, that to many of them life could be but a lingering death.

As they reached the great oaks the guard, with the bodies, passed around to the northern entrance of the cemetery, while the rest of the procession poured in at the other, and arranged themselves as near as possible to the open graves, the music of the band changing to "Come ye Disconsolate."

In my childhood I had heard my mother sing that hymn, and in after years I had heard it many a time swelling from the lips of a great congregation. But never had the sweet, old tune seemed so full of soothing harmony, of tender pleading, of triumphant faith, as when it rose soft and clear above those narrow graves; floating upward like the breath of fervent supplication, and dying away amid the sighing of the Summer wind in the pine branches over our heads. The coffins were lowered into the graves; the chaplain, stepping forward with uncovered head, offered a few brief words of prayer; the guard fired three volleys above their dead comrades, and then in broken squads the men turned back to the hospital.

"I am glad we can live outside the lines," said Nell as we walked slowly away; "I never could breathe freely in the midst of so much

suffering. I should want to go away and get fresh life somewhere."

"O, it is n't dull here, I assure you," said the doctor's wife in an animated way. "We have some very pleasant society among the officers, and we have something going on almost all the time. We have splendid sailing parties these moonlight nights."

Nell looked at her with such undisguised astonishment that I feared she was going to add words to looks, but Mattie quietly said,

"You must find a great many demands upon your time now the wards are so full, and so many of the nurses away."

"O, as to the wards," said the pretty little woman, "I seldom go into them. It only makes me nervous and miserable, and the nurses take excellent care of the men. I do n't suppose half of them would be as well treated at home."

"But there must be a great deal the nurses have no time for," said Nell; "reading to the men, and doing little things to cheer and amuse them."

"O yes," was the answer, "I might easily spend my whole time there, I dare say, but I have n't any fancy for such things, and then the men do n't expect it. They are used to hardships, and do n't expect any thing more than to be made comfortable."

We were close by the officers' quarters, and she invited us into her little house. The rough walls were ornamented with two or three fine pictures, and a bouquet of exquisite hot-house flowers filled a china vase upon the table. They came from the city, she told us, and had been sent her by a friend. She entertained us charmingly for half an hour, treated us to cake and strawberries and cream, which were brought in by a colored boy, and accompanied us beyond the lines with a smiling good-by.

"She is a very lovable woman," said I after we had walked some distance silently. "One can't tell without trial just what effect constant familiarity with so much suffering would have. It is a new thing to us all."

"O treacherous Susy!" said Nell, jumping down from the fence where she had climbed to reach a branch of wild honeysuckle, "you are fairly purchased with the sweets of luxury. When the taste of the strawberries departs from your mouth you will not so abound in charity."

"There's Esther," said Mattie, as we came in sight of the house; "I wonder how she has spent the day."

"I'll warrant one thing," said Nell; "she has accomplished as much real good as any one of us to-day. Esther Marston always is just in the right place. She is my model woman."

The model woman rose up from the door where she had been reading to old Mrs. Parker as she watched for our coming, and hastened down the steps.

"She's coming to meet us," said Nell; "she must be glad to see us; the dear little Esther; she shall wear my honeysuckles to-night."

But Esther only went around to the kitchen door and busied herself with putting supper on the table.

Nell pouted in mock displeasure, and Mattie laughingly remarked,

"The model woman is always in the right place. I'm anxious for my supper in spite of that tantalizing lunch."

Nell was unbounded in her praise of the really delicious stew which Esther serv'd up to us.

"Where in the world did you find so many larks?" she asked after a careful inspection of the contents of her plate, "and how should you know how to cook them?"

"For the last matter I consulted a cook-book," answered Esther gravely; "as to the larks, I—I created them."

"O, admirable Esther!" exclaimed Nell; "woman of wonderful resources!" And just then old Mrs. Parker put her head in the door to ask,

"I'd like to know if you're really eatin' them things?"

"What things! What is it, Esther?" we all asked in chorus.

"Nothing," said Esther coolly, "only these unfortunate animals belonged in their happier days to the tribe that

"Neither walks, nor runs, nor flies,
But goes it with a jerk."

"Frogs!" exclaimed Mattie, in a horror-stricken voice.

"Yes, frogs," said Esther; "good, are n't they?"

"Very," answered Nell, calmly going on with her supper; "did you catch 'em, Esther?"

The question was too ludicrous, and we burst into a hearty peal of laughter at the idea of our dignified school ma'am out in the swamp catching frogs.

Then Esther explained that the family who had recently vacated the house were French—"sort of heathen," Mrs. Parker says, that talked gibberish no Christian could understand, and ate reptiles and such outlandish things. "This morning a little boy called with some frogs which he expected to sell to them. He seemed greatly disappointed at not finding his customers, and as the frogs were nicely prepared and put up with the greatest neatness, I ventured

to buy them myself. I have great faith in French discernment in matters of appetite, and I really think this a dainty dish."

And so it was, as any one who relishes turtle soup or young poultry will agree, if they will make an unprejudiced trial.

This was not all. Esther had inquired into the history of the boy, and learned that his father was a soldier, who went into battle at Pittsburg Landing and was never heard from afterward. The family had been reduced by his loss from plenty to poverty, and only obtained a scanty support by the industry and ingenuity of the children.

"I went to see them," said Esther, "and found that one of the daughters is a cripple—confined to her bed by hip disease, and suffering more or less constantly. She is cheerful and uncomplaining, and helps to support the family by making a variety of fancy articles. She has learned the art of skeletonizing plants, and showed me some exquisite specimens that were completed. You know what extravagant prices they ask at Loudon's for those specimens of ivy and passion-flower in glass cases. She has some full as beautiful, and some scamp is making a speculation out of her by purchasing them of her for only fifty cents each. I came right home and wrote to Loudon about her, and I have no doubt he will take all she can prepare at a fair price."

"Who stays at home to-morrow?" asked Mattie.

"We shall all stay," said Esther, speaking "as one having authority." "Mrs. Parker says if we will make her a glass or two of jelly we may have all the rest of the currants for the soldiers, and we will pick them to-morrow."

As soon as the dew was dried from the bushes we went to work to gather the currants, and by noon had heaped almost every available dish with the beautiful fruit. In the afternoon we prepared it for drying, and made a quantity of jelly under the supervision of the minister's wife, who came over with her baby and gave us the benefit of her experience. And this was the beginning of a new branch of our business, for at her suggestion we asked of several families the privilege of gathering a portion of their fruits for the soldiers, and never in a single instance were we refused. Then, as the season advanced, we found abundance of berries in the woods and pastures, whortleberries and the delicious wild blackberry, free to every one who would take the trouble to gather them. So our stores increased continually, and no miser ever gloated over his gold with more delight than did we over our jellies, cordial, and dried fruit.

We also carried to the hospital in our regular visits frequent rolls of bandages, towels, handkerchiefs, stockings, etc., partly of our own manufacture, and partly the result of collecting among the good people of the village. We found many who were ready to give, but the majority had come to look upon the hospital simply as a convenient market where they could obtain the highest of prices for any thing which they might wish to dispose of. In the good minister and his wife we found the most valuable of friends, and on the whole our Summer's campaign was so heartily enjoyed by us all, and so satisfactory in its results, that it was with real regret that we left the place of our retreat when the close of vacation summoned us again to our labors in the city.

"Where on earth have you been all vacation?" was the inquiry that greeted us, as one and another of our associates depicted the pleasures and gayeties of their various resorts.

"In the country," said Nell simply, not caring to invite either comment or criticism.

"I should think so," said dashing Louise Harvey, taking one of Mattie's brown hands in her dainty white ones; "you look as if you had been making hay or planting."

"We have," said Esther, and that was all we ever told them of our Summer's adventures.

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IT was past the middle of June, and delightful visions of the long Summer vacation began to rise before the eyes of the weary teachers in the city schools of P. To some they were visions of pleasure, excursions, from which they should bear away such memories of beauty and grandeur as should make bright the dull routine of another year of toil. To some they were visions of quiet and rest in homes that waited for them among green hills and broad meadows, of gentle ministrations from loving hands and words of comfort from tender lips.

We four girls—Mattie Grey, Nell Bowers, Esther Markham, and myself, Susan Little—sat in our common sitting-room at the boarding house on Elm-street and consulted for the twentieth time how we should spend vacation. There were no homes waiting for us, and our empty purses forbade any mention of costly recreation.

We had been drawn together four years before by our common misfortunes, having found ourselves left alone of all our fellow-teachers to drag out a dismal ten weeks in the stifling air of the city, and we then resolved to mend our fortunes. In that same dingy little room we entered into a solemn compact to abjure kid gloves, fancy silks, charming embroideries, and the whole catalogue of costly trifles, and devote the amount thus redeemed to the purpose of rendering our vacations profitable to mind and body.

Had we ever felt like drawing back? Sometimes when our more fortunate friends pronounced us "shabby" in our attire; sometimes when lifted eyebrows said "miserly" at our refusal to subscribe to the fund for giving some well-fed alderman a gold-headed cane or a service of plate, but never when we stood with throbbing hearts where the Almighty had poured the floods of Niagara from his hand,

or, gazing down from mountain heights into valleys "fair as the garden of the Lord," saw the waters of the Blue Juniata twinkling in the smoky light below. Never during the enchanted days when we floated over the silvery waters of Lake George, or wandered, as in a dream of romance, among its lovely islands.

But here was a new Summer, that had come to us after a year of hard times—a year of war—and found us all impoverished. There had been daily calls for help in behalf of those whom we all recognized as brothers, and we had gladly responded till we could do no more. We compared our cash accounts and found we had simply enough to pay our board at city prices till Fall. We looked in each other's faces blankly and waited for suggestions.

"We can go into the country," said Mattie, "and spend a quiet Summer in some farmhouse where board will be low."

"I don't want a quiet Summer," said Esther Markham; "I don't want to stay where people are going on in their old ways, and smiling, and feasting, and making merry, as if there was no such thing as *war* in the land. I want to see people that are in *earnest*, people that are *solemn*. I wish we could go to the hospital."

"Let us go, then," said Nell Bowers, springing up in her impulsive way; "there's the hospital at B., that is n't far."

"They would n't take us as regular nurses," said I; "we are too young and inexperienced; it would n't pay to train us for so short a time, and how could we support ourselves with board nearly double what it is here?"

"You always have your *douche* of cold water ready for my enthusiasm, Susy," said Nell, shrugging her shoulders with a comical grimace.

"It's to be done in this way," began Esther, quietly, as if her thoughts had never wandered from her first idea. She was a little, slender-looking body, with a low, even tone in talking, but we had all come to consider it a matter of course that Esther Markham was to decide all disputed questions for us. "We can go to the hospital at N. They need help there, for they are further away from any large place, and we can take board in the little village two miles below, go up every morning and return at night."

"Capital!" exclaimed Nell again.

"And we are to walk there; to N., I mean," said Esther, looking around at us all without a shadow of a smile.

"To walk there!" echoed Mattie and I, "why, it is—no body knows how far."

"Not much over a hundred miles," said Esther; "and why can't we walk as well as men? Did n't we walk up and down Mount Washington last Summer, and did n't every gentleman in the party give out except Willets?"

"Of course, we can walk," said Nell; "I should like to join a pedestrian excursion of all things. I did wish I was a boy last year when those Yale students were here on their route to the White Mountains, camping out in the woods and having such jolly times."

Three weeks from that day a small trunk was dispatched from the city of P. to the little village of L. Said trunk contained four very plain suits of clothing, and a few other articles which we deemed really indispensable for our Summer's use, and nothing more. The following morning before sunrise our pedestrian train of four got under way from a farm-house just out of the city, this being Mattie's suggestion to avoid the probability of a newspaper item entitled, "*Whims of Women*," or "*Singular Freak of some of our Young Ladies*."

Our traveling costume consisted of a dress of stout gingham, short enough to clear the foot comfortably without suggesting the need of pants; a capacious apron of brown linen furnished with ample pockets; substantial boots of soft, thick leather; a long, loose sack of brown linen for an outside garment; and, to crown all, a hat of dark straw, whose broad, shelving brim answered perfectly the purpose for which hats ought to be made, and shielded the face of the wearer from sun and rain. We had each of us a light, covered basket, containing a simple lunch of fruit, biscuits, etc., which was to be resorted to in case of need.

With a merry good-by to the friends who had entertained us through the night, we started on our journey. It was lightsome traveling for a time as we trod the green country road for the first time in many years, with no fear of damp feet or dew-bedabbled skirts. Tangles of alder and wild roses filled the ditches, festoons of bindweed, with its delicate cups of opal and pearl, dangled from the fences; clover-meadows were heavy with dew and fragrance, and bird-songs thrilled everywhere with gladness. We saw the gates of the morning unfold, and the new day burst in its glory upon the sleeping world, and our hearts and lips sang *Jubilate*.

Walking was no new pastime with any of us. For the sake of economy we had long boarded at a distance from our schools that would have daunted many, and found the walk in every respect a benefit, and the discipline

thus acquired had enabled us heartily to enjoy rambles and romps when others sank exhausted from fatigue. So we kept bravely on, without molesting the precious lunch till eleven o'clock found us approaching a large, red farm-house, which had been described to us as about eight miles from our starting-point.

"We will stop here to eat our dinner," said Esther, and we swung open the gate and marched in a solid phalanx toward the open kitchen door. A woman was bending over the great cooking-stove examining the progress of the dinner, which sent out savory odors through the steam which enveloped her, and she did not see us till we stood at the threshold.

"We would like to stop here and rest a little while, and eat our dinner," said Mattie, who chanced to be foremost.

"I do n't keep *tavern*, bless you!" answered the woman after a stare of astonishment.

"I know," said Mattie, "but we have brought our dinners; we only want to rest and get some cool water."

"O, *picnickers*, be ye? how far did ye come?" said the woman, wiping her hands and bringing forward some chairs.

"From near P.," said Nell, dropping into a chair with a look that told how weary she was.

"How did ye come?" was the next query, as our questioner peered around for carriages.

"Walked," said Nell briefly, pulling off her hat to fan herself.

The woman looked from one to the other of us in amazement, and only repeated ejaculations of wonder till Esther said, "We are going quite a distance on business, and had no way to go except to walk; besides, we are used to walking and we like it."

"Well, if that does n't beat all!" said the woman. "I've heard tell that city gals was no account for walkin'. You can stop a bit if you like, and you'd best go in the front room; it's middlin' hot here."

She opened the door into a large room, darkened with green paper-curtains, and, bidding us wait on ourselves, went back to hasten her dinner, lest "the men folks should have to wait for their victuals."

We felt greatly refreshed by a wash at the wooden pump out of doors, and then Nell suggested dinner, with a ravenous glance at her basket.

"We are too tired," said Esther; "wait and rest a little and we shall avoid headache."

So we disposed ourselves as comfortably as possible on the chintz-covered lounge and in the old-fashioned arm-chairs, till presently a

loud blast from a tin horn announced to some distant mowers that dinner was ready. In a few moments there was a vigorous splashing at the pump and the sound of men's voices, and just as we commenced an attack upon our baskets of provisions our hostess came in with a cordial invitation to her table.

"I do n't suppose you're used to our ways of livin'," said she, "but I reckon a bit of lamb and a taste of garden sass would n't hurt any of you after such a walk."

We looked at Esther, who accepted the invitation at once, and we were ushered without any further ceremony to the table, at which three stalwart men had already seated themselves. Our hostess made a brief statement of the position of affairs as she understood them, and then devoted her energies to keeping the plates of her guests well furnished. I am sure we did ample justice to her hospitality, for the good woman could not at all appreciate the keen relish with which we devoured her green peas and new potatoes—luxuries unheard of at that season by dwellers in second-class city boarding-houses.

"What do you do for a livin'?" asked one of the men at last.

"We teach school," answered Mattie.

"All school ma'amis? You do n't say!" was the response, accompanied by a look that satisfied us that school ma'amis were above par in that vicinity.

"Got any relations where you're goin'?" was the next question.

"Brothers," replied Nellie, looking at Esther for confirmation.

"We are going to N. to visit the hospital there and try to do something for the soldiers if they will let us," said Esther Markham, looking in the woman's face with her clear, grave eyes.

"And you're goin' to walk all the way?" she asked with a wondering face.

"All the way," said Esther, smiling, and at that moment we were transfigured from strangers and wanderers to heroines, almost to saints.

"My Joe is in the army," said the woman with glistening eyes. "I'm thinking of him all the time mainly. I just thought to myself as I was shellin' them peas what a master hand he used to be for green peas, and wishin' I could see him set down and eat 'em again. I take it as a real providence that you stopped in."

The dinner was finished, the men went back to the hay-fields, and the woman hastened through her work and joined us in the front room. She was eager to talk of her Joe and

hear all we could tell her of the soldiers; so Esther gave her a full account of our occasional visits to the hospital down the river and to the city barracks. She told her how the wards were arranged, and how the poor boys lay in their narrow beds, cleanly and well cared for, yet pining for familiar faces and words of sympathy and cheer. She told her how one poor fellow had first laughed and then cried at learning that Mattie and I came from his far-off native State, and the good woman said, "dear sakes," and drew her apron across her eyes.

We staid till three o'clock, and then took our leave to go four miles further to the village of S., where we proposed to spend the night.

"Be them kind of clothes fashionable in the city?" asked our hostess as we donned the rest of our attire.

"No, ma'am," said Nell, frankly, "but we thought them suitable to our purpose."

"Well, I must say you're the sensiblest-dressed persons I've seen for many a day," said the woman, "though I did think them hats looked sort of outlandish when I first see you."

We parted from her with hearty thanks for our entertainment, and were followed clear to the road with her earnest wishes of success to us and our undertaking.

"We have made a brilliant beginning at any rate," said I as we went leisurely on our way; "did you feel any like a beggar, my lady Markham, as you sat at dinner to-day—eating the peas and potatoes of charity?"

"Not a bit," was the earnest reply; "it was simple hospitality, as freely given and as frankly accepted as if we had been a party of knights and she a noble baron of the olden time."

And so, sauntering slowly onward through the Summer woods, we came into the pretty village just as the swallows were flying home to the eaves and the church windows all ablaze in the red light of sunset.

We had not sought singularity in choosing our attire, yet we knew it was peculiar enough to attract attention; so we made our way as directly as possible to a quiet-looking inn that stood near the entrance of the principal street. There was a pleasant yard around it, though the fences were dilapidated, and sun and rain had removed every trace of inscription from the clumsy wooden sign that hung creaking from a great elm by the gate. A blow from the brass knocker brought to the door a young miss, who peered at us curiously from under a friz of short curls, worn in a boyish style over

her forehead. She readily promised us entertainment, and ushered us into a large room with painted floor, low ceiling, and huge fireplace, garnished with an armful of asparagus. There was something really comical in her lofty condescension toward us, and in the jaunty, self-satisfied air with which she thrust her hands into the pockets of her ruffled apron and sailed out of the room in quest of "*paw*," as she styled her paternal ancestor.

"My lady has been to the city," said Nell with a merry dance of her eyes; "she knows what *style* is, and can see at a glance that we are not *quality*."

The landlord himself made his appearance in a moment—a smooth-spoken, obsequious man, who protested he did not keep public house, but had retired from business years before; still the house was large, and he and his daughter quite lonely, so they were always glad to accommodate a friend or so. The smooth stream of words might have flowed on all night, but was suddenly checked by Esther's straightforward inquiries about rooms and supper. He could give us a double room if we preferred, and supper would be ready in an hour.

He fulfilled both promises, and, after disposing of a very comfortable supper, we took possession of our upper chamber, the exact counterpart of the room below, with the addition of two large, white-covered beds, that looked so extremely stiff and spotless that Nell suggested that they looked "as if they were *dead and laid out*."

The evening was delightful, but we were too weary to linger long with our admiration. We discussed for a moment the feasibility of removing the huge feather beds from the bedsteads, but weariness carried the day, and we plunged boldly in with the comforting reflection, "it is only for one night."

Alas, for human hopes and expectations, "since upon night so fair such awful morn could rise," for when we opened our sleepy eyes in the gray light of the early dawn, the very windows of heaven seemed to be opened, and the rain was pouring down in torrents.

"Now, then," said Mattie, jerking herself upright in the bed, and looking at Esther as if she considered her personally responsible for the position of affairs.

"Into each life some rain must fall," responded Esther with a heroic attempt at a smile to help the quotation.

"It's going to be a long storm," reported Nell, coming back from the window and climbing into bed again; "let's go to sleep, girls."

And we went to sleep to be wakened by a bell rung loudly at our very door, and after a deliberate toilet we went down to breakfast, not in exuberant spirits, but by no means desponding. Little Margery, as her father called her, radiant in a morning dress of the most elaborate style, dispensed our coffee with a shrug of her shoulders at the "miserable weather," and her "*paw*" dealt out some delicious mutton-chops with the encouraging remark that he "reckoned it had set in for a spell of weather."

He seemed determined to find out from what strange country we had strayed, and where we were going, and oddly enough selected Mattie for his source of information, probably because she was in appearance the most timid of the party; I am as sure he would as soon have thought of questioning the grand Mogul as Esther. Mattie stood the attack bravely, and replied with a series of smooth indefinites that did infinite credit to her Yankee *cuteness*, and Nell came to her relief by interposing in every pause remarks and questions as utterly foreign to the matter as could be imagined, so that in the end our worthy host did not add largely to his stock of information.

"Now, what is to be done?" was the question asked by lips and eyes as we shut the door of our room upon us after breakfast.

"Stay here, of course, till the weather is favorable," said Esther, "and in the mean time we will send for some yarn and knit stockings for the soldiers."

So we sent for yarn and needles, commenced four big blue stockings, and all that long day our needles clicked busily, our lips keeping time with laugh and song, and at evening we compared progress with eminent satisfaction. Nell carried off the palm by a full inch, and was declared winner accordingly.

Strolling into the great sitting-room after tea we made a grand discovery of a melodeon behind the door. Mattie took possession with a shout of delight, and after sundry fantastic performances, dropped with her low, sweet voice into that tender German song,

"The long, long weary day."

It always stirred me to the saddest depths of my soul, and no one ever sang it with a truer expression than Mattie. She kept on playing a sad, sweet melody after she had finished the song, and in the twilight I could see Nell's bright eyes glistening with tears, while Esther stood with her forehead pressed against the window; no one knew whether she listened or not.

"What a solemn tune!" said Margery, coming into the room, "do n't you know any dances?"

Mattie dashed into a noisy polka, and rattled through a waltz or two, and then we all went up stairs with a simple "good-night" to little Margery.

There was no promise of fair weather when we looked from our windows late that evening, but soon after midnight the storm wore itself out, a fresh breeze sprung up, and at sunrise there was nothing to mar the stainless blue of the sky save here and there a fleecy cloud sailing slowly away into the dim distance.

"We can start as soon as the ground dries a little," said Esther; and so we did, after replenishing our baskets of lunch and paying a very moderate hotel bill.

Our stay in town had been thoroughly noised abroad, as the weather and Margery's household duties admitted; so, as we passed through the streets, doors and windows were filled with curious faces peering out shyly or boldly at us.

"I declare," said Nell, laughing, "this makes me think of the pilgrims passing through Vanity Fair. Do n't you remember how dear old Bunyan has it? 'And behold, even as they entered into the fair all the people in the fair were moved, and the town itself in a hubbub about them; first, because these pilgrims were clothed in such raiment as was diverse from the raiment of any that traded at the fair. The people, therefore, made a great gazing upon them.'"

We all breathed more freely when we left the rows of white houses behind and came into the open road, where the fields were glowing and sparkling after the rain, and we joined heartily in Mattie's merry song,

"On foot I gayly take my way."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A TRIP: WITH AN ADVENTURE.

TEN years have witnessed great changes and improvements in the interior, and especially in the north-western portion of Pennsylvania. Where now the iron rail is laid, and the locomotive roars and shrieks like an imprisoned fiend through the echoing woods and hills, I travelled with a buggy, when even the possibility of a railroad seemed to be an absurdity. Four days of hard driving brought me to a point now reached by railroad in less than one, including stoppages and connections. Much of that country is still a wilderness, and so far as cultivation is concerned, it will ever remain one; but the timber, the coal, and the oil, which are productions on the route, will be gathered and turned into—I had almost said gold—but now the word is, greenbacks.

My tour was not one of pleasure or of pastime. It was one of business, and I was travelling against time. On the second day out I reached Potter's Fort, and, counting distances, I became convinced that, instead of resting on Sunday, the badness of the roads would force me to travel on that day, if my destination was to be made by the time I must absolutely be there. I shall avail myself of some notes made at the time, and I do so the more willingly, because I desire to enable persons to com-

pare now and then. From Potter's Fort I crossed the mountains to Bellefonte, the county-seat of Centro County, and about the centre of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

'In this County they burn *bituminous coal* altogether, and in Bellefonte they tell me it costs them, counting waste and dirt, from seven to ten dollars per ton. In Milesburgh, something nearer to the banks, it costs sixteen cents per bushel, and it is calculated that twenty-eight bushels make a ton. It is not so good an article for stoves as the *anthracite*, not keeping fire so well, requiring more attention, as well as being more dirty—in addition to which, it has to my olfactories a very unpleasant smell.'

As to the smell, I have since got better acquainted with the peculiar odor, and do not find it so disagreeable as formerly; but I account for that fact upon the hypothesis that a man can get used to any thing. When anthracite was first introduced into the bituminous region, a certain shopkeeper was induced to purchase a ton; but, not knowing the nature of the article, found himself utterly unable to do any thing with it. Finally, in despair, he offered any man who would make his stove red-hot with it, fifty dollars. A man from below, on hand at this time, accepted

the offer and made the money, though the peculiar make of the bituminous stove is not favorable to anthracite coal.

I started from Milesburgh early in the morning, having a drive of about fifteen miles to a place called the Snow-shoe. It was high noon when I got there. Such rascally roads I never saw before; and as if to make it more provoking, every house you come to is a *toll-house*. I vented my anathemas unsparingly on the whole tribe of people who had any thing to do with these roads. In fact, they had rapidly been losing all appearance of a *pike*, and now looked much more like a *sucker*, for it was almost impossible for my horses to pull their feet out of the mud, it was so deep and sticky.

Commend me to a woman for a toll-gate keeper. Let one specimen suffice: 'Well, madam,' said I, as she stuck an uncombed head out of the door, 'how much is to pay?' She surveyed me and my outfit for a minute or two, and then asked: 'For goin' through only wonst, or twist?' 'Only once,' I answered. 'Don't you mean to come back this way?' queried she. 'I can't tell,' I replied. 'Well, may be you won't come back this way,' she drawled out after another good look at myself and rigging; 'It's three cents for goin' through wonst.' Whereupon I laid the three Jersey dollars in her unwashed hand and departed.

At the Snowshoe, bituminous coal costs four cents a bushel; at the banks it can be bought for three. It is said to be of an excellent quality and in immense quantities.

From the Snow-shoe I drove to the Carthaus, and there, at the premises of the old Dutchman after whom the place is named, crossed the west branch of the Susquehanna.

During the previous afternoon's drive, for it was about dusk as I crossed, I saw a boy coming along a sort of bridle-path, and he struck the road just as I came to the place. Tired of riding alone, I asked him to get up, which he very readily did. He was a sharp lad of

twelve or thirteen years, and professed to know all about the surrounding country and people. I inquired about a stopping-place for the night, and he informed me that he had an uncle who kept a tavern about five miles beyond the Carthaus, that it was a first-rate place to stop, and that I would be well and kindly entertained. Shortly after he had impressed me with the importance of passing the only other house between the river and 'my uncle's, he desired me to put him off, and he struck into another bridle-path, which, so far as I could see, led into the interminable forest.

My friend had somewhat overdone his business; and I had serious misgivings whether his uncle's house was the proper place for me to stop. I came to the conclusion that if the first house looked at all like living, I would trust my luck there instead. I was glad to find, when I reached it about nine o'clock at night, very tired and hungry, that it was new, painted white, and, so far as I could see, every thing about it neat and good, including fencing, stabling, sheds, etc. My call was answered by a man about forty-five years of age, who was the proprietor. He showed me into a pleasant room, took my team and cared for it; and in the mean while, a very motherly looking woman came in to inquire about supper, which was soon served. It was a meal to which I yet look back with satisfaction, so different from my expectations in that region. The bed and the breakfast were equally nice and good.

It was Sunday morning. Instead of being at my destination, a day and a half would be yet required to reach it, and I prepared to go on. I inquired of my host for stopping-places, and especially of 'my uncle's. He gave me a very bad account of it; and I have every reason to believe it was not exaggerated; for on reaching it, I saw about the house, even at that early hour, twelve or fifteen drunken men, with guns and dogs, and every indication that the traveller who stopped there might remain.

The distance to the first place at which it was, in the opinion of my entertainer, prudent to stop, was a day's drive, the roads being so heavy that not more than thirty, or at most, forty miles could be made.

It was the most dreary and fearful ride I ever had. For more than fifteen miles of it there was not a single habitation. You are surrounded by a dense forest, with scarce a living thing to break the monotony of the awful silence. You are alone with those grand old trees, whose tops have towered to heaven for generations of men, and which seem yet to be in the green vigor and growth of youth. What, thought I, is man compared with these surroundings? His little life is rounded by a sleep. He boasts his three score years and ten, but lives scarce half of that; while these trees, defying the storm, and wooing the breeze, have stood for hundreds of years.

The houses in this country are no great beauties, to be sure, but after travelling for half a day in the wilderness, you begin to want to see one, nevertheless.

I arrived in Caledonia, on Bennet's Branch of the Sinnamahoning, about four o'clock on Sunday afternoon. I stopped at the only tavern in the place, ordered horses to be fed, and something to eat for myself directly, adding that I wanted to go further that night; for Caledonia was not to be my stopping-place.

The landlord promptly replied that I could not go on that night; that the mountain I had to ascend was one glib of ice, and my team could never get up it. I inquired for a blacksmith, and being informed where I could find one, set out to hunt him, while my horses were feeding and my supper preparing.

I found the blacksmith, but he flatly refused to sharpen a shoe that night. Neither persuasion nor money could induce him to go to work; and I returned to the tavern in a more uncomfortable state of mind than I cared to own. Half a dozen hard-looking customers were

seated in the bar-room. I gave mine host, perforce, my whip, cloak, and carpet-bag, and seated myself by the stove. It was early March. Supper was announced, and a hard one it was. After I had eaten what I could, I returned to the bar-room, the only place I saw to sit in, and again seating myself, continued my cogitations.

Presently one of the company asked: 'How far are you going, stranger?'

'I am going to Ridgeway,' I replied, desperately, believing that perhaps, upon the whole, the truth was the best.

'Going out to buy coal-lands, I suppose.'

'No, sir, I am not going out to buy coal-lands.'

'Oh!' said he, with a kind of a hitch up, 'now I think, the Treasurer's land sales come off to-morrow, perhaps you are going to look after wild lands?'

'No, sir, I am not going to speculate in wild lands.'

There was a pause, but presently he returned to the attack with:

'If you want a few lumber-rafts, I think you can buy them as cheap here as you can anywhere along the stream.'

'Yes, I suppose so,' I answered, 'but I am not going to purchase any lumber.'

The conversation flagged, and the landlord presently came to the rescue with a new subject, and I was apparently forgotten. Subsequently I entered into general conversation with them, and endeavored to put myself at ease among them. About nine o'clock I went to bed, and when I came to examine my room, the door thereof had not even a latch, let alone a lock or a bolt. The questions of my friends down-stairs had started some very unpleasant thoughts; and as I never carried any weapon more dangerous than a pocket-knife, I first thought to push the bed against the door; but upon examining the window, I found it to open on a shed-roof, which was not more than eight feet from the ground; I therefore concluded that the difference of entry was immaterial, and closing the door with a piece of shingle

stuck into the keep of a broken bolt, went calmly (?) to my rest.

Now, you know, I was not killed on that occasion. I was not even disturbed, and slept like a rock all night. In the morning, the blacksmith roughed my horses, I went on to Ridgeway, completed my business; and praising the bridge that had carried me safely over, returned to Caledonia and staid there again over night. Thence I made my way home as rapidly as possible, and it was in its vicinity that the singular circumstance happened, which I shall proceed to relate.

I was persuaded that my dangers were over. So far they had been imaginary, as I now could see. I was reaching points, habitations, and persons whom I knew, and felt at my ease. Less than one day's drive from home, I arrived at a hotel where I had passed many a night, all of whose people and arrangements I knew, and where I proposed now to spend the night. As it happened, there were no strangers about the house, and I retired to rest at the usual hour. The day had been very fine and warm, and I threw open the window and door, and, thus securing a current of fresh air through the room, got into bed.

I had occupied the same bed and room frequently, and lying there resting myself, I heard the sounds of the retiring family and servants gradually dying away, and presently the whole house was buried in profound silence.

Still I lay awake, and imperceptibly there stole over me a feeling, sensation, or idea, call it what you will, which seemed to impress me with the notion that I ought to get up and shut the door of my room. The thing was so utterly absurd, that I fought against the conclusion for an hour. But during that whole time, there was constantly increasing pressure upon my mind that the door must be shut. I cannot put in language any intelligible idea of the influence which possessed me. Coming from nowhere, induced by nothing I had seen or heard, happening at a place

where I was familiar with every thing, the sensation was of the most extraordinary character.

At length I succumbed to it—I got up and quietly shut the door—as quietly as I could, the noise being scarcely perceptible to myself. I returned to bed.

I had not lain five minutes, when the very same mental pressure seemed to be burning into my brain the impression that the door must be locked. Against that conclusion I fought valiantly and vehemently; but in spite of me, the impression grew more and more distinct, and the impulse to get up and shut the door absolutely irresistible.

Half ashamed of an action I could not help performing, but which I thought to be an useless and silly one, I got up as noiselessly as possible and stepped to the door. It was a patent arrangement, and bolted by letting a dead-fall upon the latch. With the utmost caution, I let down the dead-fall, and stood there pressing it with my thumb, so as to secure the object.

While I still stood in that position, I distinctly heard a person in bare or in stocking-feet approach the door, stop, and the next moment quietly take hold of the outside handle and attempt to lift the latch. It turned slightly before reaching the catch, was pressed hard against it when reached, as I could perceive, then slowly and noiselessly the handle was turned back to its natural position. Three several and distinct attempts were made, and then, with the same stealthy tread, the footsteps stole away into silence.

When no sound was any longer perceptible, I once more pressed the dead-fall firmly upon the latch, and flinging myself upon my knees, offered up most unfeigned thanks for what I could not help believing now, was a special providential intervention in my behalf. I had a large sum of money with me, but not a soul in that house, that I am aware of, had any knowledge of the fact. Whether I had been followed and only overtaken

there, or whether the attempt was simply an experiment, I could never determine.

I slept the balance of the night without any fear, and at breakfast in the morning no stranger was at the table or about the premises. I asked no questions of any body, but paid my bill and went on my way rejoicing.

I shall not speculate on the facts above set forth. There are various explanations, and each man will adopt that which agrees with his theory of the phenomenon. The narrative is the naked truth; nothing is embellished, nothing added, and nothing omitted.

AN ADVENTURE IN THE ALPS.

Professor Tyndall sends to the London Times a narrative of a rather exciting adventure in the Alps. On the 3rd of July he and two friends, with a couple of guides, Jenni and Walter, ascended the Piz Morteratch. The ascent was accomplished safely; but not the descent, which was made along the Morteratch glacier.

We at length reached the point at which it was necessary to quit our morning's track, and immediately afterwards got upon some steep rocks, which were rendered slippery here and there by the water which trickled over them. To our right was a broad couloir, which was once filled with snow, but this had been melted and refrozen, so as to expose a sloping all of ice. We were all tied together at this time in the following order: Jenni led, I came next, then my friend H., an intrepid mountaineer, then his friend L., and last of all, Walter, the guide. After descending the rocks for a time, Jenni turned and asked me whether I thought it better to adhere to them, or to try the ice slope to our right. I pronounced in favor of the rocks, but he seemed to misunderstand me, and turned towards the couloir. He cut steps, reached the snow, and descended carefully along it, all following him apparently in good order.

After a little time he stopped, turned, and looked upward at the last three men. He said something about keeping carefully in the tracks, adding that a false step might detach an avalanche. The word was scarcely uttered, when I heard the sound of a fall behind me, then a rush, and in the twinkling of an eye my two friends and their guide, all apparently entangled together, whirled past me. I suddenly planted myself to resist their shock, but in an instant was in their wake, for their impetus was irresistible. A moment after, Jenni was whirled away, and then all of us found ourselves riding downwards with uncontrollable speed on the back of an avalanche, which a single slip had originated. When thrown down by the jerk of the rope, I turned promptly on my face and drove my baton through the moving snow, seeking to anchor it on the ice underneath. I had held it firmly thus for a few seconds, when I came into collision with some obstacle, and was rudely tossed through the air, Jenni at the same time being shot down upon me. Both of us here lost our batons. We had, in fact, been carried over a cre-

vasse, had hit its lower edge, our great velocity causing us to be pitched beyond it.

I was quite bewildered for a moment, but immediately righted myself, and could see those in front of me half buried in the snow, and jolted from side to side by the ruts among which they were passing. Suddenly I saw them tumbled over by a lurch of the avalanche, and immediately afterwards found myself imitating their motion. This was caused by a second crevasse. Jenni knew of its existence and plunged right into it—a brave and manful act, but for the time unavailing. He is over thirteen stone in weight, and thought that by jumping into the chasm, a strain might be put upon the rope sufficient to check the motion. He was, however, violently jerked out of the fissure, and almost squeezed to death by the pressure of the rope. A long slope was below us, which led directly downwards to a brow where the glacier suddenly fell into a declivity of ice. At the base of this declivity the glacier was cut by a series of profound chasms, and towards these we were now rapidly borne. The three foremost men rode upon the forehead of the avalanche, and were, at times, almost wholly immersed in the snow, but the moving layer was thinner behind, and Jenni rose incessantly, and with desperate energy, drove his feet into the firmer substance underneath. His voice shouting "Halt! Halt!" was the only one heard during the descent.

A kind of condensed memory, such as that described by people who have narrowly escaped drowning, took possession of me, and I thought and reasoned with preternatural clearness as I rushed along. Our start, moreover, was too sudden, and the excitement too great, to permit of the development of terror. The slope at one place became less steep, the speed visibly slackened, and we thought we were coming to rest; the avalanche, however, crossed the brow which terminated this gentler slope and regained its motion. Here H. threw his arms round his friend, all hope for the time being extinguished, while I grasped my belt and struggled for an instant to detach myself. Finding this difficult, I resumed the pull upon the rope. My share in the work was, I fear, infinitesimal, but Jenni's powerful strain made itself felt at last. Aided, probably, by a slight change of inclination, he brought the whole to rest within a short distance of the chasms over which, had we preserved our speed, a few seconds would have carried us. None of us suffered serious damage. He emerged from the snow with his forehead bleeding, but the wound was superficial. Jenni had a bit of flesh removed from his hand by collision against a stone; the pressure of the rope had left black welts on my arms, and we all experienced a tingling sensation over the hands, like that produced by incipient

frost-bite, which continued for several days. I found a portion of my watch-chain hanging round my neck, another portion in my pocket—the watch itself was gone.

On the 16th of August Professor Tyndall made an expedition in quest of his watch, which was found after a rather perilous search. “It had remained eighteen days in the avalanche, but the application of the key at once restored it to life, and it has gone with unvarying regularity ever since.”

AN EAR-RING:--OR,--THE BURGLAR OF THORNY COTTAGE.

Stanhope, Hester

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[COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.]

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

AN EAR-RING:

—OR,—

THE BURGLAR OF THORNY COTTAGE

BY HESTER STANHOPE.



MISS KATHERINE LASCELLES had been spending some weeks at—well, at a fashionable watering-place, which it is not best to name particularly designate, and was preparing to depart for her city home, thereby proving, as young Noddy remarked, that the astronomers are quite correct as to the southerly declination of the sun's orbit in winter, when she received one morning the following note:

"NEICE KATHERINE:—
You may very possibly have forgotten, or have found it inconvenient to remember, that you have an old aunt living within ten miles of the Spa where you have been dissipating the last three weeks. Such is the case, however, and if my brother's child has any desire to see her father's only sister, she shall be welcome at Thorney Cottage any day after this, for a week.

LUCRETIA LASCELLES.

You may very possibly have forgotten, or have found it inconvenient to remember, that you have an old aunt living within ten miles of the Spa where you have been dissipating the last three weeks. Such is the case, however, and if my brother's child has any desire to see her father's only sister, she shall be welcome at Thorney Cottage any day after this, for a week.

"The fruit should be sweet to excuse so rough and astringent a rind. I will go and taste it," remarked Miss Lascelles to herself, as she folded the note and tossed it upon the table.

"Josephine," continued she to her maid who entered at the moment, "you will put up a few of my plainest dresses and some other things in the hat-box. I am going to spend a few days with my aunt some miles from here."

"And am I to go with you, Miss Lascelles?" inquired the soubrette, somewhat dolefully.

"No, you may stay here with Mrs. Blanchard. I shall not need you, and I do not think my aunt would expect me to bring any one."

"Very well, miss," said Josephine, and her mistress leaving her to begin her preparations, went herself to look for her chaperone, Mrs. Blanchard, and mention the contemplated plan.

That elegant dame was very well content to await the movements of her charge, not sorry to see so powerful a luminary depart even temporarily from a firmament where the elder lady preferred to shine alone.

Miss Lascelles arrived the next evening at Thorney Cottage, and was received by her aunt with a sort of frozen cordiality, which, under the influence of the subtle charm of Katherine's manner, voice and queenly beauty, soon thawed into a genial and affectionate warmth. The two ladies parted that night mutually pleased with each other, and the next were sworn friends and confidants.

The third evening arrived, and Ann, the neat and efficient maid-of-all-work, bringing in the tea tray, brought with it a message that a man wished to speak with her mistress in the kitchen.

Miss Lascelles went out, and after a few moments returned with a look of perplexity upon her handsome face.

"Now, Katy," began she, when Ann had departed and shut the door, "this is bad. Poor little Mrs. Gray, of whom I was speaking to you, is worse, and they have sent to ask if I can come and sit up with her to-night. Then Ann has had the promise for a month of going home to-night to meet her father who is coming from the army on a short furlough. She mustn't be disappointed, and I don't see how to refuse the Grays. But you can't stay here alone, and

what shall I do with you? Suppose you come with me, and I will ask for a bed for you."

"O, no, aunt, I shouldn't like to do that at all, and there is no need of it. Indeed I am not in the least afraid of staying alone, and on the whole should quite enjoy it. I am never timid, and there will be something a little novel in the experience. Please don't trouble yourself about me another moment; and above all don't think of keeping Ann at home. She was talking this morning while she made up my room, about the little festival they were to have in honor of her father's return, and I would not have her miss it for anything. You and she will both be here early in the morning, I suppose."

"O, yes, by daylight," said Miss Lascelles, with an air of relief. "And if really you don't mind—to be sure I shouldn't think of being frightened myself, and have, in fact, passed several nights here quite alone, but I didn't know about you."

"The Lascelles were never a timid race," said Miss Katy, with a proud smile, and her aunt replied as proudly:

"No, that they were not, man, woman or child of them; and I am glad, niece, to see the family spirit so heartily kept up."

Soon after tea Ann's smiling face appeared at the parlor door to bid good-by, and as she passed down the gravel walk leading from the cottage to the highway the tones of a base voice were distinctly to be heard mingling with her own.

"There's John Mann again!" exclaimed Miss Lascelles, half indignantly, half mirthfully. "And that pretty fool of a maid of mine won't be content till she has given up a good home and a good service for the situation of drudge to a laboring man, and nurse to his children. They are all alike, these girls—but for that matter they only take after their mistresses."

And Miss Lascelles looked with comic wrath toward her niece, adding:

"Now if you only knew it, a young woman like you is a thousand times better off than she would be in the best marriage she could possibly make. But you won't believe it, not you. Like all the rest of them, you will be rushing into the arms of some horrid male creature who will neglect you and break your heart, just as Ann's husband will overwork her strength, and break her head."

"I am twenty-four and still unmarried," said Katy, gaily. "And I will certainly remember your warning for the future, dear aunt, and heed it!"

"As carefully as girls usually heed an old maid's warning against matrimony," retorted the aunt, as she left the room to exchange her elegant black silk dress for one better suited to the work she had in hand. Half an hour later she reappeared in the drawing-room shawled and hooded.

"Now, child," said she, "you had better come and fasten the front door after me. I have been round myself to see that all the others and the windows are fast, so you need not trouble about them. The Gray's gardener came over for me with a lantern, for the night is as dark as your eyes, my dear."

"And as dry," returned Miss Lascelles, coming to the door and standing a moment on the step to watch the glimmer of the lantern as her aunt trudged sturdily down the path preceded by the gardener.

"Succa la tromba," hummed Katy, as she turned to re-enter the house, and locked the door.

Then she went to the piano and struck out the spirited melody with a vigorous touch, sending her clear soprano voice thrilling through the house until every echo, roused from its first nap and starting broad awake, sent back the rich notes in a hundred different tones.

It was quite two hours before the concert ended, and then Miss Lascelles suddenly discovered that the fire had burned down and that she was cold. Careful Ann had, however, provided a neat pile of logs beside the hearth, and the young lady with a little trouble laid some of these across the great brass andirons, coaxed the coals into a blaze, and then seated herself to enjoy it. The wind had risen and now began to moan drearily through the fir plantation close at hand,

and to whistle ominously down the empty chimneys, and through distant keyholes and passages of the quiet house; but, although Miss Lascelles noticed it as disagreeable, her excellent nerves declined to be in the least troubled, and after listening awhile she went to the bookcase and looked for some interesting volume to help off the rest of the evening.

"Remarkable Criminal Trials," murmured she, reading the title of a little book in a by-corner, and with a smile of amusement at her own selection, she took it down and seated herself to its examination.

The ghastly narratives soon absorbed her entire attention, and even while shuddering with horror she found herself unable to resist the ugly fascination hanging about them, and read on and on until the great hall clock solemnly struck eleven, and Miss Lascelles, glancing up from the fearful page she had just finished, for the first time wished she were not quite alone in the house, or that at least she was safely up stairs and asleep. She closed the book and drew her chair a little nearer to the hearth, for an agueish chill was creeping through every nerve, and it was with an effort that she restrained the chattering of her teeth.

At this moment a slight noise in one of the outer rooms attracted her attention. It was very like the motion of a window saash, gently raised, and then as gently lowered.

"It is imagination!" said Miss Lascelles aloud, but nevertheless she listened attentively. The next sound was that of distant footsteps, at first vague and uncertain, then more decided. Then a door leading from the kitchen into the back hall was opened and shut, and then the slow, firm tread of a man's feet came slowly through the front hall, and paused just outside the parlor door.

Miss Lascelles had clasped her white hands very firmly together in her lap, but her handsome face did not blanch, nor did her shadow tremble on the wall as she quietly sat, her gaze fixed steadily upon the door, the light of fire and lamp flashing back from her dark eyes.

The hand turned slowly, very slowly, as slowly the door opened, and a tall, dark figure, its face covered by a black mask, stood upon the threshold.

Still Miss Lascelles neither spoke nor moved, only the white hands contracted upon each other until a great drop of blood started beneath the pressure of the diamond on one of the slender fingers, and the dark eyes flashed back the lamp light and the fire light still more strongly and undauntedly.

The masked figure stood for quite a moment looking as steadily at her as she looked at him, then quietly closed the door, advanced to the hearth, and standing with one arm lightly leaned upon the mantel-shelf, said:

"You are quite right not to be alarmed at my entrance, madam. I wish you no harm whatever personally, and when I tell you that I need such jewels and money as you have about you, more than you do, I am quite sure you will be glad to give them to me."

Miss Lascelles breathed more freely. Only a burglar, after all! She felt quite competent to cope with him, may, to foil him. After an instant of consideration, she quietly said:

"My jewels are principally up stairs. I will get them for you."

She rose as she spoke and went toward the door, but with a rapid movement the robber placed himself before her, saying with a mocking laugh:

"My dear young lady, you are very cool, but do not fancy you will so easily elude me. We will go together, and look for the jewels, and until I leave the house I must beg you not to attempt to leave me for an instant. You must be so well accustomed to similar petitions for your society, that this cannot sound strange to you."

At last Miss Lascelles turned pale. There was in this man's voice such power, such resolve; he had such evident faith in himself, such an audacious determination to control her own movements, that the haughty spirit of the young lady for one instant

quailed, and she sank upon a chair white and trembling. The burglar offered his hand.

"Allow me to lead you to a seat by the fire," said he, gently.

Without touching the proffered hand, Miss Lascelles rose and returned to her former seat. The burglar drew a chair to the other side of the hearth, and put a well shaped foot toward the fire.

"The night is chilly," said he; "I am glad you have a fire." Then taking from the floor the volume Katy had let fall, he read the title and laughed merrily.

"What an odd coincidence," said he, "that you should be reading Criminal Trials at the very moment when I entered. If only you were able to capture me now, and hand me over to justice, there would be a Criminal Trial of this very case. They would call it 'The Commonwealth vs.'—what name would they finish with, I wonder. Can you guess?"

"One which, to judge by your appearance, should never have been so disgracefully published," said Miss Lascelles, severely.

"Ah, then I make a favorable impression upon you? I am too happy," said the man, maliciously. "Favorable? I have far less charity for one, who having been taught better things, deliberately turns from virtue and selects vice, than for the vulgar thief whose ignorance and necessities are his powerful advocates."

"Boldly spoken and well," said the burglar, and after a pause added, gently:

"And yet you misjudge me. To be sure I have been taught, but knowledge is not always virtue. Have you never heard of a cultivation whose aim is to develop the worse instead of the better side of human nature?"

"The knowledge of good and evil is the foundation of all knowledge," said Miss Lascelles. "No man can think upon any subject without finding the simple question of right and wrong at its foundation."

There was a pause, and Katy, stealing a glance at the burglar, saw that he was looking steadily at the fire. Her hopes rose, and she said:

"Now I am sure you will not be so base as to rob the house. It belongs to a lady who uses all the means she can spare from her own simple living for the good of others. To steal from her is to steal from the poor. It is to rob starving women and children of food, to extinguish the fire upon the hearth of the feeble and helpless, to strip the clothes from the backs of shivering creatures who will die without them. Can you do this?"

She spoke with a passion of entreaty and reproach very rare to her calm voice, and fixed her fearless eyes full upon those others glittering through the eyeholes of the mask. Perhaps in all her life Katherine Lascelles had never looked so regally beautiful as at that moment, and the eyes behind the mask were keen and appreciative ones. When the burglar spoke, however, it was to answer, in a plaintive voice:

"But I am also hungry, and thirsty, and cold. Have you no compassion for me, you who have so much for others?"

"If you cannot supply your needs by honest labor, beggary is better than robbery," said Miss Lascelles, coldly.

"Not so contemptuous! What of him who cannot dig, to beg he is ashamed?"

"He should be still more ashamed to steal."

"You slay me with your scornful wit. But a repartee is not a supper, a homily is not wine. I submit, however. I beg you, fair lady, to give me food and drink, and allow me for a little longer to enjoy the warmth of this fire. Then I will go."

"Without robbery?" asked Miss Lascelles, hesitatingly.

"Do not ask me now. Trust a little to my honor," said the robber.

"Your honor?"

"Yes, my honor. And do not undo the good you may have wrought in me by such scornful doubt of its existence. Don't you know that honor above all

things is cultivated most successfully by presupposing its existence?"

"Do you really wish for food?" inquired Miss Lascelles, coldly.

"Yes. Will you show me where to find it?"

"I will tell you."

"No; I have already said I cannot lose sight of you an instant until I leave the house. My own safety demands this."

"And suppose I refuse to accompany you?" inquired Miss Lascelles, deliberately.

"Then I shall remain with you here. You bid me beg instead of steal. I have begged of you, and if you refuse to comply with my condition, it is as if you refused the whole, and by proving to me the uselessness of beggary, you force me to return to robbery. Finally, you see it will be you who have made a thief of me."

Miss Lascelles restrained a smile. "Your sophistry is ingenious," said she, "but flimsy. I will not give you, however, even this poor excuse for your crime. I will show you where to find food."

She rose as she spoke, and lighting one of the candles upon the mantel-shelf, led the way to the dining-room, closely followed by the burglar. From the closet she produced a basket of cake, and another of fruit, placed them upon the table, and paused, half inquiringly.

"O, the dainty repast!" exclaimed her companion, in tones of mock complaint. "But to a hungry man how much dearer were a wing of cold chicken, or a delicate cut of roast beef!"

Miss Lascelles felt herself now so thoroughly mistress of the occasion, that she could afford to be magnanimous. She felt, too, a certain appreciation of the ludicrous side of the situation, the fun of the thing, which made her lenient. So she said:

"Very well; come to the kitchen, and see what we can find there."

"Now you practise the charity you only preached before; now you set me an example worth a hundred exhortations," said the robber.

Miss Lascelles slightly elevated her head, but made no reply as she led the way to the pantry, as unexplored a region to her as to her companion.

"Ah, here we have something as delicate as the cake and as substantial as the beef," exclaimed the epicurean burglar, seizing a little dish with a superb cold partridge upon it, carefully set away by Anne for the morrow's breakfast. "And now a morsel of these rolls. Ah, here we have some charming little rolls. The larder does credit to your cook, madam."

"The house is not mine," said Miss Lascelles, unconsciously.

"No? Then it was not yourself whom you described just now as the beneficent guardian of the poor, the generous distributor of the wealth you begged me to spare?"

"Myself!" exclaimed Katy, indignantly, as she turned upon her companion, and catching the joyous gleam of his eyes, saw that he was jesting with her. A sudden laugh was added to the young lady's stature.

"We need not discuss personal topics," said she, haughtily.

"Pardon. I did not mean to offend," said the burglar, humbly, as they re-entered the dining-room, and he deposited his viands upon the table.

"But I am thirsty, too," expostulated he, when all was arranged.

Miss Lascelles silently pointed to the silver ice pitcher upon the sideboard.

"Ice water! But may I not have a glass of wine?"

I am sure there is some in this cellar."

"You are enough of a gentleman to know that under the circumstances it would be improper for me to offer you wine," said Katy, gravely.

"Thank you! You regard me as a guest—you speak of yourself as my entertainer—you acknowledge that I am amenable to the laws of hospitality—you do not treat me as a robber and an outlaw," exclaimed the burglar, breathlessly, as he approached close to the young lady and extended his hand.

"I make the best of a bad situation. I remember your own assertion that 'honor is best cultivated by presupposing its existence,'" said Miss Lascelles, seriously. "But I will not touch your hand; I do not forget that your very presence here is a crime; that you are a law-breaker and a—"

" Thief? Why do you hesitate? And yet you are not afraid of me—I can see that. You are alone, unarmed, and—a beautiful young woman, and yet you are as self-possessed, as regal, as if you were in a hall-room," said the man, slowly dropping the last words from behind his mask, while his dark eyes burned like coals upon the calm face so steadfastly raised to his.

His words suggested possibilities which had not before entered the young girl's mind. She considered them for a moment, and then quietly answered:

"I am not alone, for God is with me. I am not unarmed, for weapons are always near to a brave hand; if I am a woman, you are a man, and so, sworn to my protection."

"Again, well and bravely answered," said the burglar, in the deep voice of suppressed emotion. "And now see, here is my only weapon. Keep it for me."

As he spoke he drew a small revolver from his breast and handed it to Katy. She took it, looked to see that it was capped and loaded, then laid it on the table.

"I think," said she, quietly, "that neither you nor I are to be held in awe by merely physical fear. A man's honor should be more sensitive than his body, a woman's self-respect a surer protection than any weapon."

"Perhaps, too, you could not fire the pistol if you

tried," retorted the burglar, with his mocking laugh. For reply Miss Lascelles took the weapon in her hand, aimed at one of the drooping roses upon the paperhanging, and was about to pull the trigger, but suddenly lowered the pistol, saying:

"If the shot were heard it might summon those who would treat you with less consideration than I have done."

"I thought of that," said the burglar, calmly, "but would not stop you. I thought—"

"You thought it was a scheme of mine to summon assistance!" exclaimed Miss Lascelles, contemptuously.

"Do you know, sir, I never scheme?"

"Yes, I know it. You are too proud and too brave to be cunning. But I thought my fate never could come to me in a sweeter guise or from fairer hands, and I would make no effort to evade it."

An angry blush burned upon the face of the proud beauty. She walked away to the window and opened the shutter.

"To open the shutter is almost the same as to fire the pistol. Do you choose to do it?" asked the deep voice of the masque.

Without reply Katy re-closed the blind, and seated herself in an arm-chair. Her strange guest applied himself to his supper, eating delicately but with relish.

"I am sure you will take a slice from the breast of this delicious bird, the very apothecary of a partridge," said he, carving as he spoke.

"No, I thank you."

"Not? Then I may give you a bunch of these Catawbas, for

"There grows no vine
By the haunted Rhine,
By Danube or Guadalquivir,
Nor on island or cape
That bears such a grape
As grows by the Beautiful River."

You will have them for the sake of the verse, if not for their own, and I will not even ask you to remember that other stanza which says that

"Their sweet perfume
Fills all the room
With a benison on the giver."

As he spoke he laid the plate with a choice cluster of the grapes upon Miss Lascelles's lap. She neither accepting nor refusing the attention, let it remain, and saidly said:

"Your life has not been without opportunities, and you have found no better use for them than this."

"No more. You will drive me mad if you speak in that tone, if you persist in showing the immeasurable distance I have placed between myself and you," exclaimed the burglar, passionately.

"And me? And good, you should have said."

"I did say it in saying you," returned the masque, so simply as to show that he meant no flattery, and did but speak what to him was truth.

"To see the wrong should be to turn to the right," said Miss Lascelles, more gently.

"Should be—yes. But is it always, or is it ever?" asked the other, bitterly.

"Sometimes, surely. And I could forgive you in my own name and that of society, your offence in entering this house, if I could believe that it should be so with you," said Katy, earnestly.

"You could forgive—and forget?" asked the burglar, significantly.

"Why should you care whether I forget or not? We shall probably never meet again," said the young lady, with a slight return of hauteur.

"Ah?"

It was impossible to say whether this monosyllable was an interrogatory, or an exclamation, or a promise, if indeed it were not all three, and Miss Lascelles looked inquiringly toward the speaker. He, however, was absorbed in the reconstruction of the pyramid of fruit which he had disturbed in withdrawing the grapes, and did not appear to see or feel the mute inquiry.

"And now let us return to the parlor," said he, rising. "I have kept you too long in this chilly room."

Miss Lascelles rose, hesitating a little, and finally said:

"You have been warmed, and fed, and sheltered. You can ask for no further charity, and if you do indeed feel a pang of remorse for the guilt that led you here, you will show it by instantly withdrawing."

"No. I have more to say to you, and I wish to say it in the room where I first saw you," said the burglar, coolly, and held open the dining-room door.

Reflecting that to resist was but to prolong the contest, Miss Lascelles swept through it, sufficiently showing her displeasure by the erect carriage of her head and the quick steps which led the way to the parlor door.

Once more she sat in the fauteuil where an hour before she had been startled by the entrance of the burglar, and once more he leaned upon the mantel-shelf, looking steadfastly down upon her.

"Will you tell me your name?" asked he.

"No."

"Folly! Do you think I am so easily balked? See here."

He strode to the table, and, from the little work-basket with its elegant litter of toy work and luxurious implements, picked up a card-case.

"It is yours?" asked he.

Miss Lascelles deluged not so much answer as the stir of an eyelash. The robber waited a moment, then opened the case, took out a card engraved "Katherine Lascelles," and replaced the rest where he had found them.

"Excuse me!" said he again, and from her lap raised a handkerchief in whose corner was embroidered the initials "K. L."

"Yes, it is your name, and it suits you well," said he coolly, as he let the handkerchief fall again upon the silken lap. "Now, Miss Lascelles, what I have to say is this. I have fallen in love with you, and I have resolved that you shall yet be my wife. I do not ask you ay or no to-night, for you have as yet no foundation for either, although of course you think you have. I came to this house as a robber. I will carry from it but one article not strictly my own, and that is one of the ear-rings you now wear. Will you give it me?"

"Certainly not, sir, and I consider your declaration—"

"Very audacious. Of course. You could hardly do otherwise," said the robber, with perfect coolness.

"But the ear-ring I must have. Will you give it, or do you force me, however reluctantly, to take it?"

He stooped over her, and extended his hand. Miss Lascelles haughtily drew back.

"If you resort to force, I must yield, of course," said she. "And rather than you should touch me, I will give you the ear-ring."

She unclasped it as she spoke, and laid it upon the table.

"So coy, and so proud! Well, I like you the better for it," said the mask, taking up the jewel and examining it.

The device was original. A bird, Aladdin's roe, it might have been, with widespread wings, clutched in one claw a monstrous diamond, while the other was curled beneath him.

"A fanciful conceit; and though the bird fly far, and sail through many skies, and over many seas, he shall return at last to the mate who will not forget him, who cannot but wait for him."

Miss Lascelles would not understand the significance of these words, and replied, haughtily:

"Unless I summon the police to my aid, I see but small probability of recovering my property, and shall probably have the stone you are so generous as leave me, re-set: Will you have these also?"

As she spoke, she took a few cents from the depths of the work-basket, and contemptuously held them towards the stranger, whom she now chose to regard as a common thief. With an angry motion he was about to reject them, but suddenly seizing the hand and coins, he said:

"No, you cannot make me angry, but by insulting me you make me bold, and thus I punish you."

He stooped, and kissed her lips with a long, firm kiss, and then was gone. Gone so swiftly that not one of the indignant words that crowded Katherine Lascelles's lips had time to form itself in air. Hardly had the heart that had leaped to her throat in checking resentment, beat its first angry protest, before she was alone, and the firm footfalls in the hall were already dying away in the distance.

Half an hour later, Miss Lascelles carried a pair of burning cheeks, and another of angry eyes up stairs to bed. But first she went into the dining-room, and removed all traces of more than one feaster, silently taking upon herself the onus of having indulged in a most unusual supper, for she had resolved to keep the disagreeable adventure wholly to herself, unless circumstances should demand an explanation.

The pistol remained upon the table, and this, after a little hesitation, she carried up stairs and deposited in her own trunk. Then she went to bed, but I fear not to sleep. At any rate, her pallid cheeks and heavy eyes next morning awakened the attention of her aunt; who, although she was far too delicate to say so to her niece, connected these unfavorable symptoms with the disappearance of the partridge and rolls, of which Anne had informed her.

The next day, Miss Lascelles returned to the watering-place, and soon after to the city. Here, in the midst of her usual engagements, surrounded by commonplace events and people, the memory of her wild adventure became nearly incredible even to herself, and at last almost passed from her memory. The pistol she had locked in a disused desk, the odd ear-ring she had arranged as a pendant to a brooch, and as she had never confided the story to any one, there was finally nothing and no one to remember her of what she was very willing to forget.

A year passed. The season was in its height, and the world held its breath awaiting the decision that it had perceived Miss Lascelles must soon make between the most prominent of her admirers.

The elders, and the worldly-wise declared in favor of Morris March, "for every one knew all about him," which meant that every one knew he was of good family, had pretty fair talents as a lawyer, and had finally inherited a large fortune from his uncle.

But the young, the romantic, the lovers of excitement, gave suffrage as a man (or girl) for Morez-More, the count, the baron, the duke, the potentate. Morez the Spaniard, no, the Cuban, no, the Moor, finally, Morez of whom no one knew anything, except that he was handsome, distinguished in manner, wealthy, and had dropped into society, no one knew when or how, or through whose agency, and that he was more in love with Miss Lascelles than any one who was not a Spaniard, a Cuban, or a Moor could possibly have been.

What the world knew of Morez, Miss Lascelles knew, and nothing more; but also like the world, she felt the wonderful fascination of his manner, and peculiarly enjoyed his animated conversation. But also, Morris March was a charming companion, a man of research and ability, and then, as the world justly remarked, "every one knew all about him."

So Mrs. Grundy waited, and Miss Lascelles and her two lovers went on to the end.

It was one day when senior, or, as most people said, Count Morez was speaking of jewels, and especially commenting upon the brilliancy of the diamond-swinging pendant-wise from Miss Lascelles's brooch, that a sudden suspicion flashed across that young lady's mind.

"It is a rather singular ornament, and was originally worn as an ear-ring. Have you ever seen one like it?" asked she, looking full in the Cuban's face.

"I have seen many diamonds," said he, smilingly, "but whether one as fair as this I cannot say, until I look at it away from its present position."

"But the setting. Have you ever seen an ear-ring of this device?"

"I think not, but I have seen nearly all the rare gems in the world; I believe. It was in Persia that I saw diamonds. Imagine a robe, where the pattern was traced in jewels of different hues, so disposed as to reign natural flowers."

Miss Lascelles listened to the story, and thereafter suscepion to sleep. But it awoke again, and thereafter haunted her so remorselessly that she became by turns so rigid in her treatment of him, and so eccentric in her cross-examinations of his reminiscences of jewels, that the unhappy nobleman was driven to the verge of despair, and at last, risking his fate by a direct proposal, received the peculiar answer:

"A free confession might have won you pardon; but now it is impossible: I forgive, but can do no more."

The fascinating count turned pale, then red, and finally, in a husky voice, begged Miss Lascelles to explain her very singular intimation.

The young lady looked at him with contempt.

"Shall I restore you the pistol you lost two years ago?" asked she.

The count let slip an oath (fortunately in Spanish, with which language I am unacquainted, and so am spared the necessity of repeating it), and rushed furiously from the room.

The suspicion in Miss Lascelles's mind departed forever, and a certainty took its place. She rang the bell, and said to the servant who answered it:

"James, if Señor Morez calls again, you will say that I am engaged."

"Yes, ma'am," said James, in deepest humility, changing, as he closed the door, to a broad grin and the chuckling remark:

"But not to him. Three cheers for March, I say."

Sad, but true, that servants will have eyes, and ears, and tongues other than those required for their work.

With solemn glee did James that evening inform Mr. March that Mr. and Mrs. Lascelles were gone out, but Miss Lascelles was in the drawing-room, and would he come in?

Mr. March hesitated, not fancying, poor innocent, that the solemn servitor was no more deceived than he was himself, as to the joyful sound of those tidings, and then came in, and went up stairs.

Half an hour later, he sat upon the sofa beside Miss Katherine Lascelles, with his arm about her waist. Well, what then? They were engaged, and some people do such things under such circumstances.

"Say just once, 'I really and truly love you, Morris,'" pleaded the lover.

The words softly formed themselves upon Katy's smiling lips, but hardly went any further.

"Remember, you have said it," said Morris, somewhat nervously, "and now, darling, take my betrothal present."

He laid something in her hand. She shily glanced at it, then uttered an exclamation, and sat upright. It was her lost ear-ring.

"This! What, you! No, but how did you come by it? Did Count Morez send it? How did you know? O, do tell me quickly."

"What was it you whispered a moment ago, Katy?"

"I don't remember—O, I said—I love you, Morris." And the color flushed all over the beautiful face, and the great eyes drooped, as Love once more claimed his supremacy.

"And will you give me a kiss, Katy?"

A deeper blush, a slight motion of the regal head towards his own, and Morris claimed his right.

"That is the second time I have kissed your lips, Katy, although the first time I had no leave. I stole the kiss, and I stole the ear-ring, but O, Katy, you stole my heart, and that was worse."

Miss Lascelles made a motion of withdrawal, but her lover held her fast.

"No, Katy, you have owned that you loved me, you have given me a kiss. Now you are my own, and there is no escape. Wait until you hear the whole story. I saw you at Saratoga, and of course, fell in love with you the first day. That evening, you disappeared; and on inquiry, I heard that you had gone to your aunt's at Thorny Cottage. I had met Miss Lascelles on two or three occasions, and resolved to call upon her, and cultivate an acquaintance with her. I rode out, and was almost at the cottage, when I met a young woman of whom I inquired the way, and also if she knew whether Miss Lascelles was at home. She briskly answered that she lived at Thorny Cottage herself, and Miss Lascelles had gone, or was going, out for the night, and no one was at home but her niece, Miss Katherine Lascelles. I thanked her, and rode on, thinking at first that the game was all up, as I could not, of course, call upon you. Pausing before the cottage, I saw a bright light in the drawing-room, and a boyish impulse prompted me to dismount, steal up to the house, and peep over the shutters into the room.

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"I watched you, Katy, for quite half an hour, and then a wild scheme came into my head, and took such hold of my fancy, that I resolved to put it in execution. I stole away from the window, re-mounted, and galloped to Saratoga, dressed myself in dark clothes, put into my pocket a mask, which I had provided in case a masquerade came off while I was out at the Springs, rode back, put my horse out of sight in a little wood, prowled about the house until I found a back window left unfastened, made my entrance, and you know the rest. I did my best to frighten you, Katy, because I wanted to shake you out of that imperial calm, which kept me at such a distance, and I talked in the 'grand, gloomy and peculiar' style to keep up my character.

"When I told you I would marry you, sooner or later, however, I meant what I said, for I knew that I loved you so deeply and truly that you could not but return my love, though the day might not come that week, or the next. I never felt that it had come, till to-day, Katy, but now—you said you loved me, dear."

"And so I do, but—"

"Nay, no qualifications. I have made my confession, and I take my pardon thus, and thus."

It was not until several days, not, indeed, until Count Morez had disappeared from "society" as suddenly as he appeared, that Miss Lascelles remembered to tell her lover of the erroneous suspicions she had cherished regarding him.

Mr. March laughed outright.

"My dear child," exclaimed he, "you could hardly have hit harder if he had indeed been the robber. Count, or rather, plain Senor Morez, killed another creole in a duel, near Havana, and so ran away for safety to the States. He is rich, and well enough in every way except this, and some day his friends will get him a pardon, and he will go back to Cuba. But when you talked to him of confessing his crime, and then taunted him with a mysterious pistol, of course he thought you knew everything, and probably his natural indignation acted favorably as an antidote to his passion."

"How very unfortunate, and how very ridiculous," said Katy, laughing and blushing, but as the senor had disappeared, and as an explanation would at any rate have been somewhat difficult, the matter was dropped, and the fascinating count never knew exactly whether to believe Miss Lascelles slightly insane, or that she knew all about his "little affair."

By special request of the quasi burglar, the pendant was re-set as an ear-ring, and Miss Lascelles wore the pair recently, on the day when she became Mrs. Morris March.

CHRONICLES OF THE CLOVERSIDE FAMILY. No. 3.

BY PAUL LAURIE.

The Rebels call us Hessians now-a-days, but really I fail to perceive anything at all similar between our soldiers of the present day, nearly all of whom have been born on the soil, and most assuredly all of whom are *Americanized*, if I may use such a word, and those unwieldy men the British sent over against our forefathers. But I never hear the term Hessian that I am not reminded of one of the strangest adventures that befel my grandfather during the six years he served his country.

JERSEY WAGES; A TALE OF 1776.

The year 1776 you all remember was a most critical period in the history of our country.

Especially was its close, when the enlistment of a considerable portion of the soldiers expired, a critical moment, during which the whole country may have been said to have held its breath in very fear and terror. Any of you who are familiar with the history of the country at that period will remember the circumstances which relieved the people of a portion, at least, of their excessive alarm. Our greatest painters and writers have immortalized themselves while attempting to depict the sufferings and bravery of that small army which battled against cold and storm, against snow, and ice, and current—that brave army, which obeyed its venerated leader to the death—which nothing on earth seemed to appall.

When we think of that brave handful who crossed the Delaware, let us give a thought to the brave men (some of them *ours*) who are battling in Virginia, in Tennessee and Georgia, and on the banks of the James river to-day.

You already know that my grandfather possessed great courage and resolution, essential requisites in a soldier. He commanded a company of scouts, or rangers, in the year 1776. He reported to General Washington direct during the greater portion of the year, and was famous on account of his known resolution, skill and daring. He had the confidence of Generals Sullivan and Greene in particular; the first put him forward; the latter saw to it that he had plenty to do, and thus he was once evinced his appreciation of the daring

ranger's qualities, by giving him a sort of roving commission, with orders to report to the commander-in-chief such matters as might be deemed of sufficient interest.

In those days there was less of show and pretension than many people now imagine. Beyond the obedience and hearty good-will of the troops to their tried leaders, there was little in the way of distinction between the general and the private. Often the latter's attire was finer than his captain's, and in some instances the common soldier's pocket provided for the sustenance of his officer.

And few, very few, of the subalterns, wore any insignia denoting their rank. My grandfather, like the majority of the men who had staked everything in the war, paid little attention to the details of dress, still less to the observance of formality in his intercourse with his men, who fairly worshipped him. Picture that powerful young man, with a resolute bearing, almost defiant, rather indifferently attired, jogging along comfortably towards Trenton, on the morning of the 23d of December, 1776, with head leaning forwards slightly, one hand holding his reins listlessly, the whole body given up to meditation. But he was not wholly given up to meditation. Had any one observed his keen glance as he approached the ferry, (McConkey's) they would have understood that the easy-going horseman was acting a part. Arrived opposite the comfortable log house which the ferrymen claimed as his home, my grandfather paused a few minutes to water his steed and warm his hands and feet; the day was bitter cold. A heavy-set, sour-looking man threw a nod towards him when he entered, eyeing him from head to foot, as he inquired—

"What news, friend?"

My grandfather deliberately turned around, and shot a piercing glance at his interlocutor, as he replied briefly—"Bad, very bad!"

"Eh! have we lost anything?—has there been a battle?"

"No; worse! If we could only get these fellows to fight; but that is none of their policy. They are better at running."

"Yes, h'm—ahem! very true, sir—which way do you come?"

"I come from Stokebury, by the Reming-

ton road. I am going to Trenton, to see General— But who do you belong to?" queried my grandfather suspiciously, as if he at that moment bethought himself of an oversight.

"Why, any one may know where to find me; I belong to the right party."

"That means you are a pious rebel," replied my grandfather quickly, scowling back at the man, moving away from him as he spoke.

"You have said it—I don't deny it," with a vulgar grin—"I am bound to acknowledge it. But won't you have something warm this cold day?—you did not tell me the news."

"We belong to very different parties; I have nothing to say to you," was the reply; and with that my grandfather was stepping towards his horse, when, ere he succeeded in mounting, his attention was arrested by the jingling of sabres and the gallop of a horse. A moment later a gayly-equipped officer, followed by six horsemen, came riding up to the ferry. My grandfather withdrew his foot from his stirrup, waited patiently until the officer dismounted, and advanced boldly towards him as he was upon the point of entering the house, scarcely waiting to hitch his horse, which was a remarkably fine one.

"Do you know, sir, in addressing that man," pointing to the attendant, who eyed my grandfather with a cunning look, "that you commune with a rebel?"

"And who are you, sir?" demanded the officer, curtly, bestowing a penetrating look upon my grandfather, and drawing himself up proudly.

"I am his majesty's most humble servant, Bertram Foley, of Morristown."

"And what have you done, sir, for his majesty?" inquired the officer, with a supercilious smile.

To this my grandfather made no answer. Sitting down on the doorstep, turning his back to the officer, and drawing off one of his boots, he took from between the sole and a piece of stiff brown paper, a small slip of white paper, neatly folded, and handed it to the officer with a bow, holding his boot in his hand, while awaiting a careful reading of the document. The officer, glancing over the paper, then down at my grandfather, muttered something in French, from which my grandfather inferred that he was a Frenchman.

"So, so," said the latter aloud, as he returned the paper to my grandfather, with a polite bow—"very good indeed, Mr. Foley; but ha! ha! you make a very great mistake."

in pronouncing Adams here a rebel. Eh? how is it, Adams?"

My grandfather pretended excessive astonishment.

"Then you were simply acting," said he.

"That was all," replied the man Adams, with his cunning smile.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Adams," said my grandfather, extending his hand, "I really thought you were a rebel."

"Oh! no harm, sir, no harm at all; sometimes I blaze away at one party, sometimes at the other; however, one party always knows where to find me, eh, colonel?"

"And where are you going now, Mr. Foley?" inquired the colonel respectfully, as my grandfather drew on his boot deliberately.

"To Trenton."

"To Trenton? Ah! you have some news. Is it good—or bad?"

"I have heard some bad news."

"What, has Washington stole a march on us?"

"Worse."

"What then?"

"I have heard that France has promised to advance money to the rebels."

"And pray, where did you get such valuable information?" demanded the colonel.

"From a source that none of us can doubt. I got it direct of Major Tryon, who has it directly from his brother, late from Paris."

"And you consider this bad news."

"Do you not?" was the answer, and my grandfather looked the colonel square in the face.

"Can you prove to me that it is bad?"

"Why, I will ask you to reflect what the probabilities will be should these people receive foreign aid. They are now out of money, dispirited, without arms or munitions. They will give up in six months unaided; aided, there is no telling when the contest will end."

"Have you heard anything else?"

"Yes; it is said that new levies have been ordered to take the place of the men whose time expires this year."

"Ah! that is something; but if they do no more—if they do not increase the army two-fold, we care little; even then we will be successful, for the rebels, as you remarked, have but little ammunition, and few arms."

"So you are going to General Rahl with the news," said the man Adams.

"I intend to call on General Rahl," replied my grandfather, cautiously.

"There is nothing like discretion," said the colonel, adding, a moment later, "by the by, I am going back in a few minutes, Mr. Foley."

I will just give some orders to my men; I find there has been a strange oversight here in withdrawing some guards I had posted."

Now, my grandfather was playing a bold game—Nathan Hale lost his life just in that way; still he had a powerful motive; and he felt he had an even chance to learn everything he desired to know about the enemy, considering that he had Bertram Foley's pass from General Howe in his pocket. As for Mr. Foley, that individual was at that moment making the acquaintance of several true republicans, whose anxiety for his welfare induced them to surround him with muskets. And thus it happened that everything appeared to favor my grandfather, who rode into Trenton beside the Frenchman, who in reality commanded a regiment under General Rahl, but who nevertheless, as my grandfather soon ascertained, spoke German fluently. The colonel rode straight towards General Rahl's quarters, accompanied by my grandfather, who observed everything without betraying the least sign of curiosity. Arrived at the general's quarters, my grandfather at once intimated that he had an important communication to make to the general. The colonel, with a gallant bow, retired; my grandfather, with a smile on his face, and a dread at his heart, advanced to the apartment occupied by the general, whose first question, "What have you to say to me?" for a moment confused his visitor; not long, however, for he managed to stammer out, "It is not what I have to say as much as others, sir."

"Do you speak German?" inquired the general abruptly, in his mother tongue.

My grandfather only stared at him. Then the general put the question in English, to which my grandfather replied "No!" very promptly. (I need scarcely add that he did not speak the truth in this matter.)

"Who are you?" demanded the general.

My grandfather stooped, hauled off one boot, brought forth his pass, together with General Howe's unequivocal compliments of one Bertram Foley, "a most faithful spy in his majesty's service," and handed them to the astonished general, who examined them slowly and carefully. Then turning to my grandfather—

"Well, what have you to say to me, Mr. Foley? Speak out, I am alone here you see."

My grandfather went to the door cautiously, peered around slowly, returned to the general's side, then began his communication, in these words—

"I need scarcely inform you of the fact that over three thousand men will leave Washington's army for their homes in a few days. I see you know that; well, he has not more than nine thousand men in all, and part of these are of no account, ill clad, ill fed, mutinous, with poor arms and little faith in their cause; say there are two thousand who are ineffective, that will leave the general about seven thousand, which will dwindle down to four or less in a very few days. Of those four, I can secure to you at least two thousand, general." The general looked at him suspiciously, pinched his cheek, and replied—

"How can one man deliver over two thousand?"

"I have a plan."

"Oh! you have a plan! Very good, very good. Let me hear your little plan."

"It is very simple."

"That is what I like; it is very simple, so much the better; but pray be quick, I want to laugh at you, Mr. Foley."

"I assure you I am in earnest, general."

"Well, I am waiting, you see."

"My plan, as I said, is simple; you take your command across the river, attack the rebel army, rout it, and return with two thousand sand prisoners."

"Let me see, Mr. Foley; I first cross the river?"

"Yes."

"Then I attack Washington."

My grandfather nodded.

"Because, Mr. Foley, I thought perhaps Washington might take it into his head to attack me; however, since you say it, I shall

attack Washington; but as I have only a trifle over three thousand men"—

My grandfather made a hasty movement as he interrupted the general.

"Sir, you may speak to me with perfect confidence."

"And you to me," was the instant reply.

"I certainly understood that you had more than three thousand here."

"From who, from what, Mr. Foley?"

"From Governor Tryon."

"Ah!"

"Do you doubt me?"

"Oh! no; I was just saying to myself, what an ass that governor is."

"Then he was mistaken?"

"I did not say that. The fact is, since the governor was with us some important changes have occurred. I had six thousand, I now have but five."

"Would that amount not be sufficient?"

"To fight Washington with seven?"

"But when his army is weakened, as it will be in a few days?"

"He will still have six thousand."

"Two thousand of them are worse than useless, as I told you."

"I do not know it."

"Then you see nothing in the project?"

"I see disaster and defeat, Mr. Foley. I have been patient; now let me show you what you cannot comprehend, Mr. Foley. First, to cross the river it would occupy more than a day—nearly two, had we all the boats absolutely necessary; then there are no boats at present—I know what you would say, that Cornwallis will forward them at a moment's notice; but if I had them, how could I, here in Trenton, reach the other side of the river in the presence of Washington's army? they would annihilate me. Great thunder and lightning! they would kill every last man for me, Mr. Foley."

You see, my dears, the Hessian general was unacquainted with English grammar; but he conveyed his ideas very plainly to my grandfather.

"You are no soldier, that is plain to be seen, Mr. Foley—excuse me, I do not question your courage; but you do not comprehend the things a general studies, and one of those things is how to secure an orderly retreat, and you must see yourself that no one could cross the Delaware, even if there were no ice floating in it, man! and an army contesting his crossing; why, had I ten thousand men, I would not venture to cross it were there but six to oppose my landing, and I would be supported in that opinion by every man of common sense. But suppose I were over, with my five thousand—how am I to secure the two thousand, Mr. Foley?"

"Oh! all that is arranged. One of the commanders will misunderstand an order, his troops will attempt to flank you, and having permitted you to get between them and their companions, and finding themselves at your mercy, they will surrender to you."

"Instead of killing us?"

"You see they will have no powder, or rather their powder will be so wet that they cannot use it."

"Great thunder! that is good. How much does it cost now to get the powder wet?"

"A commission in the British army in the first place, two thousand pounds in the second."

"Now that is reasonable; and who will we get to wet it?"

"That, sir, I am not to reveal unless you agree to the proposition."

"But you can tell it to your friends."

"I promised sacredly to reveal nothing unless the plan should be adopted."

"So, so! I much regret that. Stay, I shall call in Knyphausen, he is a good fellow; I will hear what he has to say." As he spoke, General Rahl advanced to the door, which at that moment was opened by the officer who accompanied my grandfather into Trenton. Rahl immediately addressed him in German, inquiring if he had seen Knyphausen. The officer replied that the latter was absent at that moment, when Rahl said shortly—

"This man, is he safe; is he to be trusted, think you?"

"I know nothing of him."

"But your opinion—is he to be trusted; he says he can secure me two thousand of the rebels at a small cost."

"I think he is a royalist; but I assure you I would risk nothing on a spy's assertion."

"Yes, yes, my very thought too. Where did you meet this fellow?"

"At the ferry."

"And he came?"

"From Stokesbury."

"He is shrewd in his way. One other question, colonel, do you think he is sound in wind?"

The colonel glanced at my grandfather, who during this dialogue, sat gazing abstractedly on the floor.

"As sound as you or I, general."

"Then what do you say to my crossing the river with five thousand men in a few days, say at a time when Washington may have but four thousand men fit for fighting?"

"Do you ask me an abstract question, or do you desire my opinion as a military man, and one versed in American nature and warfare; for these rebels have a system of their own, I find."

"As a soldier."

"I should object, most decidedly and strenuously."

"That is this man's proposition."

"Then he deserves close watching."

"I must do him justice; he has overtures from one of the rebel leaders, who will wet his powder in due season."

"What! before you cross?"

"Ah-h! I did not think of that colonel.

Let me mention that to him." Then in his broken English, to my grandfather—

"How can your friend prevent his command firing on me while I am crossing?"

Sharp as was the question, my grandfather had an answer ready.

"There is the very point my friend impressed upon me. He will have the duty of resisting your landing—as the rebels always wait until they can see the eyes of their enemies, he will have but one regular volley to discharge ere you land; some scattering shots may be fired; but the first volley will be blank, remember; your men must counterfeit death, dropping in the boats; the moment you step ashore he commits the fatal blunder, and you have him and his command."

"Eh? What think you?" demanded the general of his colonel.

"I say to watch him; it is wholly improbable and totally at variance with established military rules, which at every turn impresses us with the extreme difficulty of following up any plans which depend upon but one improbable contingency. War has so much of chance work about it that any one who adds thereto, or in any way fails to adopt all *reasonable* precautions, must be an idiot, general."

"I see you have not forgotten your illustrious preceptor, colonel. You utter my very thoughts. But see, there is some one beckoning to you, colonel."

The colonel left the room. He was absent five minutes, which my grandfather thought thirty. When he reentered the room, he advanced to the general, smilingly. The latter was talking to my grandfather about the country and its resources, when the colonel said, still smiling—

"This man is suspected by Adams; he thinks he is a spy; he has never seen Foley; but he will be back with one of his cousins sometime to-night."

"And in the meantime?" replied the general, blandly.

"Oh! I will play the host, never fear for the keeping of this fellow. I shall invite him to sup with me."

"And hang him to-morrow!"

"With alacrity, if I find that he deserves it." Then turning to my grandfather, and still wearing his smile—

"Mr. Foley, I have made arrangements for you to sup with me to-night; the general is very favorably impressed with the proposition submitted to him; but he will, as a mere matter of courtesy, request the opinion of

Generals Knyphausen and Anspach before answering; is it not so, general, or did I understand you aright?"

"Perfectly, Colonel Maillet."

The general bowed to his visitor, a hint my grandfather instantly comprehended; taking

his hat, he accompanied the agreeable colonel to his quarters. You may observe, my dear,

that when there is nothing more to be expected of a person, and the world has succeeded in

injuring that person beyond reparation, every one immediately bestows unusual deference and marks of consideration upon the individual

wronged—you were reading the details of that horrible execution in our jail-yard this

morning; well, the train of ideas suggested, or something very similar, occurred to my grandfather as he sauntered beside the plausible

colonel, pretending to feel elated at the high

honor conferred upon him, enjoying to the life

the colonel's jokes and witticisms; but secretly

resolving that if he managed to outwit his

enemies that time, somebody else might try the spying business in his stead. Not that he

was a coward; he was not; but he wanted

justice done to his memory in the worst con-

tingency; and unfortunately no one had been

informed of his secret design; not one. But

while the gay colonel was relating old adver-

tures over his wine, my grandfather was think-

ing to himself what a fine fit his next neigh-

bor's clothes would make for him, giving an

ear to the colonel and his boon companions, and

an eye to the general features of the premises,

which interested him much more than any-

thing ever interested him before or afterwards.

He observed that a clear space of about five

hundred yards intervened between the house

he sat in, and the one nearest it on the east

side; also, that a rude stable adjoined the

colonel's quarters, on the left side, and what

was a source of discomfort to others was a

music in his ears—he heard the steady pawing

of an impatient horse at the stable door, could

hear its teeth biting the very corner of the

house next him.

"Colonel!" exclaimed one of the party,

"why don't you put your horse up; he'll

have the house down on us."

"Oh! I want Sam to exercise him; I sup-

pose he is picking out his gray hairs."

But my grandfather could have sworn the

horse was saddled and bridled. He prayed

inwardly for two things; that the company

should separate, leaving but one watcher with

the colonel, and that that one might be his

next neighbor; and his prayer was granted.

The gay party broke up, leaving Captain Oldham, Colonel Maillot and my grandfather to drink two bottles of wine, which manifestly did disappear; but therein my grandfather, entering upon his quickly conceived plan, had no hand, farther than to fill his glass, contemplate it lovingly, sip it and slyly pour it on his knee, so that, instead of going to his head, as wine usually does with people, it went to his feet. And all the while he was becoming exceedingly merry. He managed to deceive the captain, who refilled his glass oftener than either of the others, and in a short while began to exhibit signs of stupor; finally he lay back drunk in his chair. The wine was all consumed; the captain was dozing, the colonel wide awake, looking suspiciously at my grandfather, who sat directly opposite him, imitating in the best manner he could the conduct of a man slightly inebriated. He stretched a hand towards the heavy decanter, pretending he was wanting wine, grasped it clumsily, elevated it slowly to fill his half empty glass—when there was an awful, a *horrible* blow, and the colonel was falling to the floor, when my grandfather with the swiftness of lightning caught him in his arms and laid him down upon the floor gently. With his right hand (and a powerful hand that right hand was, it once felled a bullock), he had swung the decanter bottom downwards upon the colonel's head. Without giving a thought to the fallen man, he immediately began to undress the now sleeping captain; in a trice he stood adorned with the showy dress of his now contemptible foe, while that foe slumbered on blissfully ignorant of the fact that he had been transformed into a civilian. Dashing into a side closet in search of weapons, he found the colonel's sword and pistols lying on a chair; these he secured, then glancing merely at the awful still face upon the floor, he went out, closed the door carefully behind him, invoked the aid of the Almighty silently, then descended the stairs and demanded the colonel's horse of a servant who loitered in front of the stable. The man looked up at him curiously.

"Be quick man, the colonel is anxious to hear me off. There! that will do; by the by, do not go away, as the colonel will want you to carry a message to General Knyphausen in half an hour! And with that the daring fellow rode off at a slow trot until he was leaving the town, when he put the high mettled horse to a gallop, and away he flew towards the ferry. Oh! that was a gallop for life!"

He had nine miles to ride before he reached the ferry; he accomplished those nine miles in forty-five minutes. When he reached the ferry, he hurriedly inquired of the guards posted there if they had seen such a person, giving a description of his own dress which then covered Captain Oldham in Trenton. No one had been seen wearing such a dress; he inquired after the man Adams, and they told him he was away on business; offering a reward of three pounds to whoever would bring him information at General Rahl's head-quarters in Trenton concerning the spy, he dashed on, forgetting to give the countersign, which was then on; away miles beyond the ferry, out of sight of everything living, and there he crossed the river when it was almost dark, and still riding on through the darkness, with only the snow-light to guide him, he made straight for General Washington's head-quarters. Twice he was fired at promptly by his friends ere they discovered their mistake; but once safe inside of the lines, with the countersign, he reached Washington's head-quarters without experiencing farther danger. Ushered into the general's presence, the latter bent a severe look upon the showy British uniform, and a questioning glance upon my grandfather, who deliberately extended the richly mounted sword and pistols which he had taken from Colonel Maillot to his chief, with the laconic expression—

"These, too, I captured, general."

"When?"

"But yesterday evening, in Trenton."

Washington grasped his hand, his whole face illuminated by that rare smile which beautified his features, as he exclaimed, "Then that explains everything, Captain Cloverside; you have just arrived then?"

"I was Colonel Maillot's prisoner yesterday afternoon. I have had quite an interesting interview with General Rahl; I have made the very best use of my eyes and ears, and, unless some one has anticipated me, I think I can give you some important information concerning our friends across the river."

And thereupon, at Washington's request, he gave him a faithful account of his adventure, describing the appearance, condition and number of the troops posted in and around the town. He often averred that the general's eyes gleamed with a fierce light that night, or rather morning, for it was then after one o'clock. The general detained him until three, questioning and cross questioning him, until he was assured in his own mind that he

understood the exact locality of the British troops, and then he gave him orders to sleep in the tent adjoining his own.

You all remember, my dears, what followed; two days afterwards Washington crossed the Delaware, attacked Rahl's troops, killed General Rahl and captured one thousand prisoners. When numbers of the Hessians were endeavoring to escape by the Princeton road, Washington dispatched my grandfather with four companies to cut off their retreat, which the old gentleman afterwards averred was the pleasantest duty he ever performed, and in which he succeeded beyond all expectation; and that was the end of his greatest adventure in the service.

No! my grandfather never received anything for the service rendered upon that ever memorable occasion. Washington offered him his sword and his pistols; my grandfather refused both, but finally told the general he needed a tobacco-box more than anything, and the general gave him that silver lined one you have so often laughed at, when our troops fell back to Morristown.

C I T Y C O U S I N S .

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH.

SECOND VERSION OF STORY.

Rewfus introduced me to Major Fleetman, the stranger, an' I introduced 'em both to my guests.

As I set some chairs for the new-comers, an' invited 'em to be seated, the Major, who was mortal perlite, an' stood scrapin' an' bowin', hat in hand, seemin' by his jennyflexions to single out Velvetiny as speshully deservin' of compliment, said :

'Duty before pleasure, ladies ; much as we should rejoice at spendin' an hour in your delightful companionship, we must come to our arrant without parley. Is there a colored person passin' himself off as Gumbo Smartweed anywhere concealed on these premises ? If there is, do not seek, through a mawdin' compassion for crime, or ruther for its perpetrators, I should say, to screen him from the just reward of his misdeeds.'

'A slave-ketcher in disguise !' says the widder in an excited whisper, an' with a convulsive clutch at my sleeve, 'an' you must put 'em on a wrong scent if you would save a feller-creetur from bein' returned to the shackles of bondage.'

Her whisper was overheard ; an' puckerin' his lips into a queer sort of a whistle, says the Major, under his breath, to Rewfus :

'Nography — malignant, infectious, desperit ; the desperit remedy of blood-lettin' the only one suited to the disease.'

Then turnin' to me, says he, aloud :

'We've been all the forenoon on the track o' this Smartweed, endeavorin' to arrest him for an offence, or, more correctly speakin', an attempted crime whose perpetration was frustrated in the immediate vicinity of Camp Gooseberry, an' in harborin' 'im, ma'am, you

are simply standin' in the way of a due administration of justice.'

'I harbor him !' says I, resentin' the imputation, 'when I've been doin' my best to hunt 'im up, fearin' he'd in some way come to harm in protectin' my property when I was n't by to look after it. Here is Mrs. Ladlegilt, too, come out o' town on purpose to take down, from his own lips, the story of his unparalleled sufferin's in escapin' the barbarities of a fiend in human guise.'

Addressin' himself to the widder with a low bow, says Major Fleetman :

'You must have been impelled by some controllin' motive, in your desire to acquaint yourself with this man's history. If you will pardon the liberty, I would like to ask why you are so desirous of acquaintin' yourself with the particklers of his earlier life.'

The widder drew up her figger as lofty as though it had been a poker in buckrum, an' says she, with a consequential air :

'I'm writin' a book, depictin' the monstrosities of pervadin' soshul evils at the South ; an' as some o' the picturs are to be drew from life, more espeshully the fleein' fugitive you are in search of, I thought to git the details accurit if I took 'em down, word for word, as he narrated 'em.'

'In my humble opinion,' says the Major, 'you would stand a much better chance of gittin' a correct account of his past life by takin' it down from other lips than his'n ; an' as I have known 'im, by hearsay an' otherways, sence he was knee-high to a current-bush, supposin' you listen to what I can tell you of the ups an' downs he's gone through with.'

'Was you brung up down South ?' says the widder, givin' the speaker a dubious glance.

'Never was south of Mason's an' Dixon's line in my life,' says the Major ; 'leastways not by a land route.'

'Then how could you have known any thing beyond mere hearsay, regardin' the adventures of the persecuted fugitive?' says Mrs. Ladlegilt with a triumphant air, as though her opponent had been fairly cornered at the first brush.

'If you'll give me a fair hearin', says the Major, 'I will so unmask this bogus fugitive that you will be as well qualified as myself for judgin' the real merits of the case.'

'I will listen to what you have to say,' says the widder, lookin' all the while as though she did n't mean to believe a word of it.

'A hearin' is all I ask,' says the Major, composedly. 'This colored person, at present callin' himself Gumbo Smartweed, was the son of a Boston barber who made a good livin' for himself an' family, for he was a cunnin' hand at strop an' razor, besides havin' natty, chatty ways very takin' to customers, an' bein' able to furbish up a commonplace story into quite a marvellous affair—as I was sayin', he made a good livin' till he took to evil ways and drinked himself to death, leavin' his wife an' children to shirk for themselves as best they could. An' a tough time they had of it, I've been told, to keep the wolf from the door, espeshully in the cold snaps o' winter, when they had freezin' as well as starvin' to dread. Thus far I'm only reportin' hearsay; but now I will give you sech facts as come within my own personal observation.

'In the back country town where I was raised lived Deacon Snow, a man of an open an' generous disposition that made 'im forbearin' towards them that fell into error, an' pityful towards all his sufferin' kind. With feelins ready to melt at every charitable appeal, it was little wonder that he was much worked upon by the sermons of our newly ordained minister, who, in common with many of his clerical brethren, brung the full power of his eloquence to bear aginst an institution which he seemed to think the most formidable intrenchment to

Satan's stronghold, to be attacked an' carried by storm at all hazards.

'Dwellin' constantly upon this one idee, the deacon's moral natur grew so warped an' one-sided, that in his view, whatever evil chance besell the country was a judgment sent upon the nation, not for the sins of the people as a whole, but as an exhibition of divine vengeance towards that one espehul sin, of whose practical workins he knew so little that the 'vile institution' took the fearful proportions of any other dimly discerned bugbear viewed through the distortin' medium of an overwrought fancy. In his opinion, those States which had cleansed their garments from the stain of slavery were still participants in its guilt, because they remained in union, through motives of policy, with other States still branded with the soshul infamy which the more favored North, through providential agency, had succeeded in throwin' off, to the benefit ruther than detriment of all her interests. To passify his conscience for havin' involuntarily, an' in strict obedience to the law of the land, participated in this, the only sin the nation has rolled as a sweet morsil under its tongue, the good deacon lost no opportunity of liftin' up his voice, in season an' out o' season, aginst the hydry-headed monster that, in the inscrutable ways of Providence, prospered an' flourished like a green bay-tree, the whole land smilin' with the fruits o' peace an' plenty beneath its shade.

'One of his favorite theories was the equality of races, in which he firmly believed. A widdered sister of his'n, who was matron of a city asylum for juvenile vagrants, comin' to spend a few weeks with him for rest an' change, happened to speak of the bright little colored boy who come every day to glean from the vagrants' leavins sech stray crumbs as fell in his way. The case was one to awaken the deacon's ready sympathy, besides affordin' a coveted opportunity for testin' the correctness of a certain

pet theory I have already mentioned. Thus it sell out that the son of the defunct barber was brung to the first home he'd ever known worthy the name, dressed in the first decent suit he ever wore, an' received the respectable name of Aminidab in place of that of Picksnip he'd hitherto bore. He was an uncommon quick-witted boy, but somehow his wits was oftenest used in makin' up marvellous stories of city wonders, for which wonderful tales his schoolmates made pay with a top, a string, or a whistle, as the case might be; in manufacturin' excuses for shirkin' his work; in obtainin' an unusual amount of indulgences, or in screenin' himself from merited punishment.

'There was no end of trouble between him an' the teachers of the district-school to which, summer an' winter, he was regularly sent. He could learn easily, if he would only apply himself; it was the will to do this which was lackin'. He seemed possessed of no motive you could appeal to strong enough to overcome his fixed aversion to the regular performance of stated tasks. He'd as lieves be at the foot as at the head of his classes; an' was fur better inclined to study into the ways an' means of fun an' mischief than to explore any other sources of knowledge. If some stipulated reward for gittin' a lesson was promised 'im as soon as it was learned, he would quickly commit it to memory an' recite it without missin' a line; but it was forgot almost as soon as learnt, for you could n't impress upon 'im the importance of storin' his memory with valuable information for futur use. He was natrally improvident, an' you could no more make 'im thrifty an' savin' of his mental stores than of any other he was ever likely to come by. In one thing he excelled: he could invent the most plausible stories for palliatin' his own misdoins, or fastenin' suspicion on some innocent comrade, of any boy I ever come across.

'He must have been about seventeen, an' a lusty, strappin' youth he was, when

I come home for college vacation, as well as to teach the winter term of the high-school which he was to attend. The deacon, who was very anxious regardin' Aminidab's improvement, sent for me in order to make inquiries concernin' his progress in his studies. I had but a sorry account to give of his idleness and inattention, an' advised his bein' taken out of school an' set to choppin' wood for a spell, when the desire to escape hard work might make 'im more willin' to apply himself to his books.

'But can he learn? That is the question,' says the deacon.

'He can learn, if he will take the trouble,' says I; 'but he is bound not to do it.'

'Then, if he can learn, an' won't learn, he must be made to learn,' says the deacon, bringin' down his foot with a little stomp, which was a way he had when very much in' earnest. 'I shall keep on sendin' 'im to school, an' you must make 'im study — *must* is the word.'

'I promised to do my best in furtherin' the deacon's plan, an' I did it. Mild measures I tried till patience ceased to be a virtue. No sooner was my eyes off him than his was off the books he hated the very sights of. If I would have promised some reward for every perfect recitation, his lessons would have been much better learned than they were; but lookin' forward to winnin' a silver medal at the close of the term, for continuous application to study, for sech a length of time, involved a greater stretch of forethought than he seemed capable of exercisin'. So day after day, Aminidab idled an' lolled at his desk, all my words of admonition or of encouragement bein' no better than so much waste of breath. Plainly I must give up the attempt as a bad job, or resort to more stringent measures than any I had yit 'dopted.

'Promisin' 'im a pair of skates that I'd outgrown, if he'd learn two pages in ancient history, he had 'em ready in

the course of an hour, an' recited 'em without missin' a word. Next afternoon, I give him one page to learn ; an' when school was dismissed, he could n't repeat the first line of it. I told 'im I would remain with 'im till the lesson was learned an' recited ; but instid of goin' to studyin', he took his slate an' pencil an' went to drawin' queer-lookin' figgers, standin' on their heads, turnin' summersets, an' in all kinds of comickle posturs. Knowin' that 't isn't always best for a schoolmaster to see too much, I took no notice of what was goin' on till he got tired of the sport an' dropped it of his own accord.

'Puttin' his open history on the form before 'im, he dropped his head on one hand, an' commenced movin' his lips as though studyin' fast. My eyes are sharp-sighted, an' I was n't long in makin' out that the book was wrong-side up. Steppin' to his side without speakin', I turned the volum round so that he could read it, an' went back to my desk. If there was any one thing in this world that Aminidab hated more than another, it was to be found out in his tricks ; an' I see that the scowl of his forehead an' the glower of his eye boded me no good-will. Lettin' his book remain as I had placed it, he took some writin'-paper an' went to waddin' it into a whole pile of little spit-balls, sech as I knew he often fired at other scholars, though I'd never ketched 'im at it. He took no pains in hidin' what he was about, but I took considruble in not observin' what he was up to.

'He wasn't the feller to stick to any thing long ; an' purty soon I see his lips movin' away as industrious as ever, although his eyes was never once fixed on his lesson.

'After the lapse of a minit or so, says he :

"I've got my lesson ; will you hear it ?"

'I did hear it—that is to say, I heard

the first line, but not another word could he repeat.

'Givin' him back the history, I awaited his next move with more anxiety than I would have liked to confess even to myself.

"I've got my lesson ; will you hear it ?" says he a second time, not two minits later.

'I heard it, or tried to, with the same result as before.

"I will hear it agin in half an hour," says I, givin' im back the volum.

'He took it, an' made believe study agin ; but with sech a buzzin' an' whizzin', that there was no use in affectin' to be deaf to it, an' I calmly requested 'im to make less noise. At this, he slatted down his book, an' begun to kick the sides of his desk while belaborin' the top with his fists.

"Stop that racket !" I sternly commanded.

'He stopped it, but fastened on my face jest sech a look as I'd once seen a bull-dog, set to guard a butcher's wag-gun, give a man tryin' to steal a sirloin from the cart, an instant before springin' at his throat.

'I felt more than half-sick of my undertakin' ; but havin' put my hand to the plough, knew it would never do to look back, an' was furthermore persuaded that any sign of falterin' on my part would put me in a worse position than that I already held. There was nothin' for it but puttin' a bold face on the matter, which, with inward misgivin', I prepared to do. In fizzykle development my refractory pupil was much my superior, he bein' thick-set an' stocky, while I had spindled up to a man's height without havin' gained the full proportions years have sence given me.

'He grew uneasy under the stiddy, unslinchin' gaze I fixed on his features, an' held his book so as to hide his face an' prevent my knowin' whuther he was studyin' or not.

'I waited half an hour, an' then of-

fered to hear 'im recite. He repeated jest one line of his lesson, no mo're. If I'd been his match in strength, I'd have given 'im the floggin' he richly deserved; but as it was, I was at my wits' ends to know how to proceed. It was plain to see that he was bound an' determined not to yield, an' I was equally bent on enforcin' submission, though at a loss as to the best means of accomplishin' the desired result.

'He took his seat, hidin' his face with his book, as before; but I could n't help seein' that he was turnin' over leaf after leaf behind the covers, an' made up my mind that he was passin' away the time by lookin' at an interestin' paragraph, here an' there, instid of at the pago I'd sot 'im to learn. Steppin' quickly behind 'im, I ketched a glimpse of the yaller-covered pamphlet he'd been readin', before he had time to slip it out of sight.

'Confiscatin' this specimen of contraband litteryture, I found, on examinin' its contents, that they was no better than moral pizen for the reader who had been so eagerly devourin' em. It was one of them popular works of fiction in which the negro is glorified into a long-sufferin' saint, while his master is vilified as the most savage an' barbarous of oppressors, richly meritin' the frightful fate to which he is ultimately consigned by that avengin' minister of justice, his tortured an' persecuted victim. In the first place, this glorified aspect in which the black man was made to shine stimulated the already noxious growth of vanity an' conceit predominant in the character of the reader to yit more unwholesome increase; an' secondly, he was strengthened in the mischievous idee that revenge an' retaliation for injustice an' wrong were commendable an' Christian virtues.

'"Aminidab," says I, speakin' calm but in earnest, 'you have no more'n time to git your lesson before it's dark; an' if you can't say it then, I shall go home for a lamp, that's all. I

shall waste no more words on you; but you may as well understand that you will learn that lesson before you go out of this school-house, if you have to stay here all night.'

'Foldin' his arms across his breast, he shot at me a threatenin', defiant glance that had no other effect than that of strengthenin' me in my resolve.

'Takin' out my Cicero, I sot about translatin' a difficult passage, out'ardly as cool an' collected as though I was n't in'ardly quakin' with dread of what was to come, payin' no attention to the drummin' an' thumpin' that confounded darkey kep up with book an' desk, though it made me so hoppin' mad that I could have tooken 'im by the nap o' the neck an' snapped 'im out of his boots with right good will.

'When it grew so dark that I could only make out the fine print by holdin' it close to the window-pane, I took the history, jest for form's sake, an' listened to that one line which was all I expected to hear.

'Handin' 'im back the book, I was turnin' to take down my coat from a peg, when I must say I was a little startled by the sound of his heavy boots creakin' across the floor.

'"Where are you goin'?" I asked.

'"Home, to git my supper," says he.

'"Take your seat!" I thundered.

'"I won't!" he shouted, his eyes glarin', an' his lips drawin' back from his teeth like those of an enraged animal jest ready for a spring.

'Seein' what a dangerous customer I had to deal with, I turned hastily to take down the heavy ruler restin' on two nails driven into the wall; but my antagonist was too quick for me, an' grabbin' up a billit of hard wood from the hearth, dealt me a blow with it over the head that felled me to the floor, stunned an' helpless. When I come to, I was chilled to the very marrow by the cold draft blowin' in from the open door, besides bein' so confused that I could n't make out where I was or what had happened.

'I do n't know how long I laid there, more dead than alive; but at last I heard a man's heavy step on the floor, an' see by the light o' the lantern flashed in my face that it was Farmer Oaks, next-door neighbor to the deacon, that was bendin' over me an' examinin' my hurt. Puttin' my hand to my head, I found the hair stiff an' matted from the blood that had oozed from my wound.

"An ugly gash that," says the farmer, "but not nigh so bad as Deacon Snow has got from that preshus darkey of his'n, who come home with a cock-an'-a-bull story of your shettin' 'im up, an' tryin' to keep 'im in the schoolhouse all night, jest because he wasn't willin' to ruin his eyesight by studyin' when 't was too dark to tell one letter from another. Instid of takin' his part, the deacon told 'im you was actin' the part of a friend in tryin' to make somebody of 'im, an' give 'im a good talkin' to for foolin' away his time at school as he did; which so enraged the chap that he picked up a milkin'-stool--they was doin' the chores out at the barn at the time--an' firin' it at the speaker's head, knocked 'im down an' left 'im senseless. I, for one, should have been right down glad to have seen the rascal arrested an' dealt with accordin' to strict form of law; but there's small chance of that, for he's run away, an' won't turn up in a hurry, if I'm correct in my way o' thinkin'."

"The cut in my head proved to be nothin' serious, but the deacon was long in gittin' over the knock-down argument with which his favorite theory had been assailed; an' in his cure he found at least a partial remedy for some of the prevailin' notions of which he, in common with the majority of his New-England compatriots, had ketched the contagion. At least I judge so by what he said at a society-meetin', assembled by the rulin' elders of the church, soon after the deacon got about, for the purpose of increasin' the minister's salary, when he riz with

difficulty to his feet an' addressed the assembly as follers:

"Feller sinners, when you bring up the subject of raisin' our minister's pay, I'm ready to give a good word an' my fair proportion of means for furtherin' the project; for our pastor, though he han't yit reached his prime, an' han't yit obeyed the apostolic injunction of bein' the husband of a single wife, is nevertheless burdened with the support of a large family; for not only are his aged an' infirm parents dependent on his providin' for 'em, but his widdered sister, who is always poorly, could n't rub along nohow, with her five little ones, if 't was n't for his help. I'm ready an' willin' to do my part to ears easin' the burden of one that is placed over us to break unto us the bread of life. I'm an old man, my dear brethren, an', as many of you could bear me witness, never had the gift of speakin' to edification, so that I can't put my meanin' into as sweet-savorin' words as other an' more tonguey members of this meetin'. But I've got an idee I want to promulgate, an' I'll do my best to state it in sech plain terms that you can't help gittin' the gist of what I'm drivin' at. The laborer is worthy of his hire; but we should look well to it that he is n't one of them blind leaders of the blind that's all sure to bring up in a ditch. To speak in good round terms, when I pay for a thing, I want its equivalent in value received to show for my money. I'm willin' to pay for gospel preachin'; but when that's said an' done, it's gospel preachin' I want for the pay. I can git a plenty of political wranglin', an' the clash of opinion incitin' to carnal strife, in the cantankerous week-day prints; but when the holy Sabbath comes, with its blessed rest from care an' turmoil, it's the glad tidins of peace on earth an' good will to men that my sin-buffeted spirit thirsteth to hear. It's for my own shortcomins, an' lamentably slow growth in all the Christian graces, that I would be brought to repentance.

an' not for the shortcomins of any other
vile worm of the dust.

"As you know, my brethren in the Lord, I've been laid up an' not able to do a chore for this long time past, which has give me more time than I ever had before for studyin' the Scripturz, an' meditation over them dark sayins that puzzle the wisdom of the wise. There is no better place than the Old Testament for studyin' the dealins of God with sinful, rebellious man. I've spent a deal of time in tracin' out the workins of that curse which Noah pronounced against the offendin' Ham—a curse that doomed to slavery, or bond-service, to use the Scriptur term, the descendants of one third of the family saved alive in the ark at the time o' the flood, to more than the third an' fourth generation. It was on his son Canaan, not on Ham himself, that the father's sin, if his offence deserves sech a hard name, was visited ; for Noah said : 'Cursed be Canaan ; a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren.' We read in holy writ that Noah did accordin' to all that God commanded ; an' I take that to be the reason that his curse was permitted to take sech a length of time in workin' out its fulfilment. Only think of it ! for four hundred years did the Canaanites, descendants of Ham, remain in slavery to the Egyptians, who not only set over them taskmasters who 'made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field,' but, grown jealous of their increasin' numbers, decreed the destruction of all male children born unto them. It was God Himself who finally listened to the cry of this long-sufferin' people, an' by miraculous interposition effected their deliverance, restorin' 'em to Canaan, the land of their fathers, after their sojourns in the wilderness. But though the Egyptians had, for some reason inscrutable so fur as our blurred, short-sighted vision is concerned, been permitted to rule with rigor over the children of Israel, not thus was they permitted to rule one over the other, as

you will see by turnin' to Leviticus, twenty-fifth chapter, forty-fourth to forty-seventh verse, in which you'll find the follerin' command regardin' the institution, delivered to Moses, on Mount Sinai, from the Most High :

"Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you ; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids.

"Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land : and they shall be your possession.

"And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession ; they shall be your bondmen for ever : but over your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigor.

"I'm as fully persuaded, my dear hearers, that slavery is a monstrous evil as ever I was in my life ; but whuther it's an evil that any power short of Omnipotence can grapple with an' overcome, I ain't so clear. Let us beware of becomin' impatient of the slow an' gradual processes by which God effects the advancement of the human race, lest, by substitutin' our ways for His ways, usurpin' the vengeance which belongs to Him alone, we not only bring mournin' an' desolation to our own hearthstones, but an added curse to them that's held to bondage within our borders.'

"As the deacon sot down, up hopped a younger member, an' says he :

"It grieves me to the heart's core to be forced to utter words of rebuke to one whose gray hairs have led us to look to him for sech wise counsels as long experience, if not woefully misimproved, would have fitted 'im to give. I repeat, my humanitarian co-workers in the grand an' glorious cause of coercin' our errin' brother to forsake the error of his ways, woefully misimproved ; for terrible as sounds the dread disclosure, our formerly revered elder

has fell from grace, in that he has fell behind the progressive spirit of the age, an' a hopeless distance behind, too ; for have n't we heard him wrestin' to his own destruction, an' our'n, besides, if we should pay any heed to his pernicious quotations, passages from the old Mosaic dispensation, which had much better be left in obscurity, as most of our risin' divines do leave 'em, than raked up to choke our efforts in rousin' to a sense of its inickwities a people dead in trespasses an' sins. Yes, my feller-laborers in the cause of reskewin' our colored brother from his master's rule, we must cry aloud an' spare not, hurlin' the thunderbolts of righteous invective aginst all sin, as the Bible plainly enjines on us to do; an' as slavery includes every known form of sin, it's clear to my mind that slavery is the hideous evil that the present generation must grapple with an' overcome, if it perish in the attempt.

"If, through failin' facultiees an' wavrin' faith, our venerable brother fall out of the ranks of the noble phalanx pressin' for'ard to clear the way for millennial advent, we of stronger faith an' lostier courage will but stop to bury the craven backslider in the unhonored sepulchre of his own fossil idees, before resumin' our weapons that shall make us victors in the conflict with evil, or martyrs to its demoniac sway."

"I need not stop for further repetition of the address by means of which the honest deacon's counsel was made of no avail. Suffice it to say, the younger speaker carried the day, an' on the succeedin' communion Sabbath carried round the consecrated emblems, in virtue of the sacred office that had been transferred from the elder to the younger disciple of a faith whose corner-stone is charity.

"In due course o' time I finished up my college course, graduatin' with a fair share of honors, but also with a liver complaint, an' health genrullly impaired. A medical friend, who had my welfare too truly at heart to care for runnin' up

a long bill at my expense, advised me to throw fizzik to the dogs, put books an' every thing connected with 'em out o' my head, an' to take up, for the time bein', with some kind of occupation that would give my bodily powers as stiddy employment as my mental ones had been subjected to for the last four years. As luck would have it, an uncle o' mine, who was commander of a New-Bedford whaleman, was jest fittin' out for a cruise to the Northern Pacific, an' takin' brief time to think over the matter, I concluded to go with 'im.

"There was trouble on shipboard before we was fairly out to sea. The colored cook, who had shipped at the last minit in place of an abscondin' down-easter, turned out to be a cheatin' impostor, who didn't know enough to swob out a caboose or brile a herrin'.

"The captin's temper, though he was a good-hearted man in the main, was as ready to ketch fire as a mess o' dry tinder at a spark, an' the make-beieve cook, judgin' from his howlins, got sech a larrupin' as put 'im on his best behavior for one while. Under ordinary circumstances, I should have pitied the feller; but on recognizin' 'im as the refractory pupil who had come within one of crackin' my skull on a former occasion, the fountains of my sympathy speedily friz. He soon learnt to git a decent meal o' vittles, an' was quite a favorite with the crew besides.

"I tried to find out what he'd been doin' sence he run away from the deacon's; but he had sech a wonderful faculty for heightenin' an' settin' off any kind of an adventur in which he'd played the principal part, that I soon found out that there was very little dependence to be placed on any account he give of his own proceedins. I partly believed his statement of havin' worked in a druggist's shop for a spell, because I could see no other way in which he could have come by his smatterin' of medical lore; an' I did n't wholly discredit his story of havin' acted the part of clown in a circus-troupe, it was so

much like 'im to fly into a rage at bein' cracked round the shins a trifle harder than was needful, an' to pitch into the circus captin', to the great delight of the audience, an' layin' 'im sprawlin' in the centre of the ring, to wind up the row by runnin' away to avoid punishment.

'To give Aminidab, or Gumbo, as you better know 'im, his due, there was n't his equal on board for spinnin' a yarn, provided he could lay the scenes of his marvellous tales in some region that was perfectly strange to the bulk of his hearers, so that the more glarin' improbabilities of his narrative need not make too exhaustive drains on their credulity.

'How often have I heard some old salt call out to him :

'Stick to your land-yarns, you lubber; we do n't want none o' your sea-sarpents that's long enough an' tough enough to strangle a whale; nor a saw-fish that could cut through a ship's plank; nor a mermaid that could figgle up a chap into drowndin' himself for the sake o' dyin' in her company; nor of an old sperm that could send a ship over the moon, an' swaller~~a~~ meetin' us at a gulp: but give us the slave-ketcher's story, an' leave out the rope-weed an' the wild darnin'-needles. Do n't set Natur to doin' the drudgery in the way of carpetin' an' cushionin' the fore-cabin of that cave craft o' your'n, nuther, for that won't go down with this child.'

'If the crew took an odd sort o' likin' to the cook, the captin' did n't share in their partiality. A certain portion of the stores disappearin' unaccountably fast, a watch was set, an' Gumbo detected in the act of emptyin' the sugar-bowl into the coffee-pot, whose contents, which he used through the day as his only drink, he further flavored with choice French brandy, from the medicine-chist, kep in case o' sickness. Under the spread to his hammock was also found a rich supply o' sweet-cake, mostly made from yeast-powders, sugar, an' flour. For this petty pilferin', he got a

good rope's-endin', an' ever after that bore a deadly grudge to the captin'.

'Shortly after this, Gumbo tumbled down the companion-way, or said he did, for the accident havin' happened in the night-watches, nobody see it take place, an' injured his leg so severely that he could n't even hobble round enough to do the cookin'. I could bile salt junk an' serve out hard tack as well as another man, an' expectin' he'd be round agin in a day or two, offered to take his place in the caboose till he got over his lameness, which, to my surprise, ruther grew upon 'im than otherways.

'A terrible blow come on when he'd been limpin' round for weeks, an' in his fright, Gumbo, forgettin' his disabled condition, flew round, lendin' a helpin' hand at halyard an' tackle with the best of 'em. It did n't make him like the captin' any better, his, tellin' im, after the gale was over, that if his lameness was n't permanently cured, he would have to submit to a flagellatin' operation that would be sure to result in his complete recovery. He up an' got well, without the application above hinted at.

'I soon see by the nods an' winks, together with an occasional whisper, exchanged with various members of the crew, that some new plan was afoot, an' by a few scraps o' conversation I contrived to overhear, was let into the mystery of the secret.

'This was the plot of the conspirators: The crew were to rise, overpower an' bind the captin', an' havin' set 'im ashore on some desert island, steer for some mercantile port where vessel an' cargo could be disposed of, the proceeds to be divided amongst the mutineers.

'I give my uncle a hint of what was goin' on, an' he soon found out that though Gumbo was in earnest in urgin' forward the proposed mutiny, his pretended accomplices were only makin' believe to fall in with his plans, in order to see how far he'd go. He went the length of approachin' the berth where my uncle was pretendin' to snore, at

midnight, with a roll o' rattlin for the purpose o' bindin' 'im, hand an' foot, when, quick as lightnin', the pretended sleeper knocked 'im down with a marlin-spike, an' bound 'im with the cords meant for himself.

'My stars! sech a whalin' as that feller got, next mornin', I never see administered before nor sence. It's my candid belief that he'll carry marks of the welts left by them blows to the day of his death.

'There was no more trouble with the chap that vyge; an' after partin' with 'im at landin', I never sot eyes on 'im till I did so, limpin' round this very place, as I was ridin' past it, a month ago or thereabouts. The minit I ketched sight of 'im, limpin' round with his arm in a sling, it struck me, knowin' 'im as I did of old, that he was up to his old dodge of shirkin' work by pretended lameness. In this opinion I was confirmed when I see 'im, not long after, makin' his way about camp as spry as a crickit, with a couple o' fowls an' a basket of apples for sale. A tough time he had of it, a few days ago, gittin' a fine young porker to the barrack of the sutler, to whom he'd disposed of it at a very cheap rate.

'He was in an' out of the officers' tents quite often, after that, tryin' to git a situation as mess-cook, an' Colonel Hapgood, of our regiment, promised to speak a good word for 'im, the first spare berth that come under his notice.

'The Colonel's wife, an' his daughter, a purty, blue-eyed, rosy-cheeked Miss of twelve year old or so, used to ride out with coach an' span, most every day, to see as much as they could of our commander before he was ordered to Washington. They rode out yesterday, after it cleared up; an' as the Colonel happened to be busy superintendin' artillery practice, the mother sot in the carriage while the daughter strayed off into the edge of the woods borderin' what used to be a gooseberry pastur before it was turned into a camp, to

pick the wild flowers she wanted for framin' an' glazin'.

'It so happened that Colonel Hapgood, who was a firm believer in the equality of races, had not only spoke to his lady in Gumbo's favor, but had gone so far as to introduce 'im to her, in presence of the whole regiment assembled for dress parade; so when he see her settin' alone in the carriage, up he swaggers an' puts himself in the way o' bein' spoke to, when she expressed herself so warmly in behalf of his oppressed an' sufferin' race, that the feller's conceit bubbled up to bilin'-pint; an' when she further tickled his vanity by mention of a clerkship she thought she could obtain for 'im, on bein' told that he was a fair accountant, an' informed 'im of a couple o' marriages which had recently tooken place, in which colored gentlemen had officiated as grooms an' highly respectable white women as brides, a great gun loaded with salt was no comparison to his pomosity.

'When he strutted away from that carriage, the proudest lady in the land was, in his estimation, no more than a sittin' mate for 'im; an' ketchin' sight o' Fanny Hapgood pickin' mullen-blows in the edge o' the wood, he went down to where she was, an' offered to show her a deal handsomer blossoms if she would go with 'im to a shady nook he could easily pint out to her. Nothin' doubtin' his worth an' sincerity, havin' jest seen 'im in close conversation with her mother, the unspectin' young erector readily follered his guidance, an' thereby learnt a lesson of distrust toards strangers that will probably last her a lifetime. Luckily, some of our boys, glad to escape the heat of the barracks, were eatin' their dinner in the shade of the oaks, an' hearin' stifled screams in the woods near by, they rushed to the pint of alarm in time to find Gumbo holdin' the feeble wrists of his almost helpless prisoner in one hand, while in the other he brandished a sharp knife with which he threatened to cut her throat if she uttered another shriek. Private Grum-

et, here, knocked the villain down, an' reskewed the poor child before she'd suffered any further harm than that inflicted by severe fright; but unfortunately, in the confusion that ensued, the intended perpetrator of a crime to which the presence of ladies forbids my more particularly alludin', made his escape; an' though we've spent all the earlier part of the day in pursuit of 'im, not a trace of his whereabouts have we been able to find. This is the more to be regretted, as we so soon start for active service, when he will stand a better chance of eludin' the pursuit an' captur that would be like to end in givin' 'im his just deserts.

'Come, Private Grumet, our horses have had ample breathin'-time, an' we must be off. But I see a pianner in the room; perhaps this young lady will favor us with the only tune we may hear for months from other instrument than drum or trumpit.'

At this, Velvetiny put on ever so many little offish airs, an' said she never was much of a player, besides bein' all out o' practice, an' awful hoarse with a cold; but after hangin' back a spell, she permitted the Major to lead her to the instrument.

After gallopin' up an' down the keyboard a number of times, she said the pianner was all out o' tune, an' would n't cord with her voice nohow, an' she could n't do nothin' with the wirey old rattletrap.

'You must drown its discords in your own volum of song,' says Mrs. Ladle-gilt. 'Sing the brayvura you adapted from *Seenyaw Picklehominy*, strikin' a few simple notes by way of accompaniment.'

After sayin' she knew she could n't artickleate a sylluble, she pitched her pipes on the highest kind of a key, an' kep it up till Scrag jined in with an awful howlin' outside the window, when I thought to my soul the drum of my ear must crack.

Before any body had a chance to speak after the performance of this as-

tonishin' vocal feet, Joe steps up, an' says he:

'Will you please to play 'Pop goes the Weasel'? It's ever so much purtier than what you've been playin'.'

'I never play them coarse, vulgar airs,' says she, hoppin' off o' the pianner-stool with a toss of the head an' a disdainful look that was n't at all becomin' to her stile o' countenance.

I suppose she thought to prove her superiority to the common run o' people by turnin' up her nose at their doins an' likins; but if she did, for once, she overshot the mark.

The pleased look of interest with which the Major had watched her rosy, smilin' face, died away as it took a less invitin' expression; an' says he to Joe:

'I can sing well enough to suit you, my boy; see if I can't.'

So he not only sung 'Pop goes the Weasel,' but another song that Joe insisted on hearin' twice over; an' when, on mountin' his horse to ride off, he tossed the boy a couple o' brass buttons with a flyin' eagle stomped on each of 'em, to decorate his red calico shoulder-straps with, his delight knew no bounds.

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

FINAL BREAK-DOWN.

WHEN officer an' private had taken their departur, the widder did n't seem to be in a very comfortable frame o' frame o' mind, an' says she:

'That Major is a very self-opinionated young man, an' t will take me a week to git over his sawfistry, an' the shaller views he seems to take concernin' the tremenjus conflict that is wagin' between good an' evil, light an' darkness, or, in other words, the slavery-lovin' South an' slaveholder-hatin' North.'

Droppin' her head on her hand, she fell into a brown study for a spell, an' then rousin' herself, says she:

'I wish I'd manidged my own af-fairs as I generullly do, instid of lettin' too many cooks spile the broth, as the old sayin' goes. By hearin' to the ad-vice of others, I've got out of all con-

ceit of the novel I set about with such unconquerable zeal. Well, it's no reason that I should faint in well-doin', if this abominable Picksnip, or What-ye-may-call-'im, did turn out ruther a scaly character, an' for the minit somewhat weakened my faith in the mental equality, or superiority, allowin' for inferior cultur, I might say, of the African with the American race. There's scamps in all countries, an' under all laws; there's exceptions to all rules; an' because there happens to be one low-lived, cheatin' knave amongst the servile classes whose virtues has been so often dwelt on in the pages o' romance, his oppressed an' afflicted brethren are not to be held to account for his misdoins. However, I wish he'd been further before ever I tried to ferret out his history, so much time an' patience as it will take to alter my story back to the original plot I at first laid out for it. On second thought, I'm inclined to believe that these alterations may be effected with less trouble than I had at first supposed. The footnotes settin' forth the fact of the narrative bein' a veritable statement of the trials underwent by the maimed an' mangled fugitive whose verbal confession it contained must, of course, be crossed out; but that may be of slight moment, for 'tan't impossible but that the book will go jest as well if admitted to be fiction as it would if pronounced to be fact. I must tone down its more incredible marvels, to avoid doin' violence to common probabilities; for if an ignorant seaman did n't believe in a cave carpeted an' cushioned with moss, an' in wild darnin'-needles an' natral rope-weed, an untutored landsman might be equally incredulous, an' in that case my novel would fail of its desired effect, an' not sell worth a red. I must somehow git word to Parson Wolf-prong that he can stop where he is, in the labored introduction settin' forth the fact that the new novel is an accurate pictur of Southern life, containin' fresh statements of the horrors of

slavery taken direct from the lips of an escaped fugitive.'

She wound up by askin' if I knew of any means of conveyance by which she could reach the parson's out-of-town residence, which was a mile or more from the line of railroad runnin' past the cottage, though but a few rods from the horse-car depot.

Feelin' that I had been the indirect cause of her spendin' a not over-comfortable day, I did my best to make up for it by sendin' Joe up to Elder Grumet's to see if he could lend me a stiddy horse, hitched to some kind of a vehicle capable of carryin' three growed-up persons.

In the course of half an hour, the elder sent me word that his best horse was gittin' ready to go to markit, but that I could have the loan of Rawbones, a regular old jog-trotter, if that would answer my purpose. So, Jack at a pinch, Rawbones was put up with; but he come down tackled into a buggy, which, I suppose, the elder thought roomy enough to accommodate three passengers; but, bless you! I could n't begin to squeeze in edgeways after Mrs. Ladlegilt an' Velvetiny had got in an' spread out their crinoleen to that extent that it took up every spare inch of space inside the dasher. When I see 't wan't no manner of use tryin' to edge myself in between their amplitude of skirts, out they got, an' went back into the house, while I driv up to the elder's to see if some new arrangement could n't be effected.

'Jest before reachin' his driveway, Rawbones threw off his left nigh shoe, an' on jumpin' out to pick it up, I noticed two horseback riders canterin' up, though I had n't no idee who they was till, drawin' rain, they stopped to speak to me, when I see 't was Rewfus an' the Major.

'It's time we was at camp,' says the latter, puttin' the back of his hand to his gilt-banded hat; 'but I must stop to tell you of our luck in pursuin' this

fleecin' fugitive of our'n. He's gin us the slip, by playin' off the humanity dodge on a credulous countryman, who believed his story of flight from chains an' bondage, with a *quantum sufficit* of added whoppers about bein' pursued by the minions of his former barbarous owner, who threatened to make a terrible example of him, when returned to the thralldom of bonds an' shackles. So pityful a case did the feller make out, that his duped benefactor paid his fare to Canada, for which blessed asylum to our wronged an' downtrod runaways he is already on his way. So justice is defrauded of its dues, an' a most dangerous criminal let loose to be a soshul scourge. See what it is to be of the prevailin' hue a fashionable philanthropy has made the rage.'

Before I had time to thank 'im for his information, both horseback riders had cantered off.

It was ever so long before I could find the elder, who was up in an apple-tree pickin' sopsyvines. When I told 'im how matters stood, he said he'd make it all right, an' jumpin' out o' the tree, walked up with me to the barn.

Rawbones, he said, was let for the next day to haul stones, an' as he could n't do that with one shoeless foot, I should have to put up with old Squills, who was ruther cont'ry at times; but Hiram could go with us as driver, the quodrupid bein' somewhat set in his peculiar notions, one of which was a rooted aversion to the tug of a strange hand at his bit.

When this notional old fogy had been harnessed into a covered waggun, a new proposal was broached by his owner, who said he'd be blowed if he'd patronize that rascally Snodgrass, a neighborin' blacksmith, any longer, sence he'd let his goats run at large, an' bark his trees, after repeated warnings to keep 'em tied.

Thus it come to pass that, owin' to the depredashuns of these aforesaid goats, Rawbones was tied to the hind exle of the vehicle I'd engaged for the

conveyance of the widder an' her daughter to their proposed place of destination, to be left for shoecin' at a smith's this side o' the parson's.

Not exactly approvin' of the way in which Squills pawed an' chomped at his bit, an' lopped back 'is ears while he was bein' tackled into the waggun, I concluded to leave Joe at the elder's while I was gone.

I rid on the back-seat with Velvety, while Hiram's head an' shoulders was jest visible on the front one, so completely was he hid from view by Mrs. Ladlegilt's voluminous skirts.

Our sorry nag crawled along at sech a snail's pace that the widder declared we must hurry up, or it would be pitch dark before we got to the parson's, when ten to one he'd be througħ with his tea, an' out for the evenin', so that she'd miss of seein' 'im altogether.

'Hurry up, can't ye?' says I to Hiram, for we'd been an awful while git-tin' over the first two miles of the way, an' it was beginnin' to grow duskish.

'Squills likes to take his own time,' says he; 'but I'll crack on if you say so.'

'He can come home as slow as he's a mind to,' says I, 'if he will only take a decent gait now.'

At this, the younker put on the string, an' off started our nag at sech a lively pace that I made no doubt we should soon reach the end of our destination; but the first thing I knew, right at the foot of an ascendin' declivity, the headlong eretur ketched the bits in his mouth an' stopped. First, Hiram tried to coax for'ard the gritty animal; but findin' mild measures of no avail, paid on to 'im, right an' left, till the lash o' the whip stood a good chance o' bein' wore all to shoe-strings; but the balky quodrupid had stranded on one of his notions, an' not an inch would he budge.

'I shall have to try the last dodge for desperit cases,' says our driver, jumpin' out o' the waggun, an' draggin' together a little pile o' sleepers from a horse-railway that was undergoin' repairs. By

standin' on this pile, he was able to reach up to Squills's head; when grabbin' 'im by one ear, he twisted it round an' round till it looked about as tight as a whipcord. The spunky beast bore the infliction as long as he could stan' it, an' then off he started on the dead run, quickly leavin' our driver fur in the rear. Mrs. Ladlegilt was n't wuth a luther button for handlin' the rains, an' I wished I was somewhere else.

Past the blacksmith's where Rawbones was to be left to be shod, we shot like a bolt from a cattypult; an' I felt like givin' myself up for lost when we met a load of hay, at a narrer turnin', an' tore off all one side of the waggun-top in gittin' past.

I made desperit efforts to climb over the back of the front-seat, but only succeeded in gittin' wedged fast between that an' the iron framework above, an' was glad to git back to where I started from.

Lookin' ahead, I see, not fur off, a long funeral procession slowly windin' its way through a tangled maze o' teams, carts, an' carriages that all but blocked up the way.

Mrs. Ladlegilt see the tight fix we was makin' for as quick as I did, an' sot up a bellerin' for somebody to stop the horse that only added to his speed.

Reachin' over the back o' the seat, I ketched the lines out of her hand, an' sawed away, with mite an' mane, at that vishus erectur's bit; but if his mouth had been made o' sheet-iron, it could n't have been with less effect. Right on in the even tenor of his way kep he.

There was a deep-gullied sand-bank a little off the street to the left, an' towards that I directed our fiery vociferous in preference to puttin' 'im through the long funeral procession, with its attendant jam of carts an' carriages bearin' down upon us not fur ahead. That sand-bank we never reached; for, without any apparent cause, that covered waggun up an' turned topsy-turvy, an' the first I knew, I found myself standin' on my head with a confused idee o'

bein' suddenly waked out of a very bad dream.

I remember that somebody said it was a wonder we had n't all been killed; an' that some other body helped me to my feet, an' bent out my bonnet-front that had been jammed over my eyes, when I see Squills leggin' it for home on the keen gallop, with loose rains flyin' at his heels, while Rawbones was backin' an' snortin' at the hind end of our unsfortynit vehicle.

'How did it all happen?' says I, not feelin' half-sure that it might n't turn out an ugly dream after all.

'In the most natral way in the world,' says an unconcerned bystander, who did n't so much as raise his finger in settin' things to rights. 'When you've got one horse in the thills, an' another hitched to your hind exle-tree, an' they take a notion to pull in opposin' directions, it do n't take much of a prophet to predict the overturn that's sure to foller.'

At this junctur, a stilish barooch, with a splendid dressed gentleman an' lady inside, driv up. He seemed to be ruther weak in the eyes, for he wore spe'tacles that shet over his nose with a spring or a snap, an' a feeble mustarsh hung lank an' limp from his upper lip. Springin' from the carriage, he flew to the reskew, an' dragged Velvetiny through the broken side of the waggun that still lay tipped over in the street.

'O my Alfonse! my adored preserver!' says she, buryin' her blushin' face in his coat-sleeve; 'name your reward for this noble, this heroic deed, an' —an'—it shan't be withheld.'

'My precious!' says he fondly, while castin' a sly glance over his shoulder at the wizzen-faced, scraggy-lookin' female in the barooch, who was rigged up to kill, but looked homely as rot for all that, havin' a tremenjous bill-hook in the shape of a nose, a yaller-grey stile o' complexion, an' a mouth determinately encroachin' on the presinks of the adjinin' featurz.

Bringin' his fair burden, as he called

the trustin' Velvetiny, round to the sand-heap where I'd sought a transient restin'-place, an' dumpin' her down beside on me, says he in a voice soft an' low as a cooin' turkle-dove:

'Remember, precious sweet, that cold an' pryn' eyes are notin' our every movement, an' control yourself, for my sake as well as your own.'

Sechin' the favorable turn matters was takin', Mrs. Ladlegilt, who had been a trifle stunned, nothin' worse, an' was now busy tryin' to git the waggun right side up with care, did her best to divert the attention of folks that was passin' from the little by-play goin' on, one side. But there was one lynx-eyed observer whose penetration was not so easy to baffle.

'Pepperidge—Pepperidge dear—Pepperidge Pitkins!' called out the bony old crone from the carriage, 'I desire to speak to you this instant.'

'I'll be with you in a moment,' says Alfonse, *alias* Pitkins, to the speaker; but to Velvetiny says he in a whisper:

'A cruel fate beckons me away from you, dearest; but spite of all, you dominate absolutely over the rovin' affections that can't be held in leash an' bond. A stern fiat of law at present interposes a barrier to the avowal of sentiments that vibrate through all my finest perceptions; but believe me, jest as soon as Providence places fortin within my own personal power of gift, I will prove to you how valueless sech acquisition would be, save as an offerin' to be laid at the shrine of her I adore.'

'Mr. Pitkins,' says the woman agin from the carriage, 'the wind is shistin' to the east, a heavy dew is fallin', an' I insist on bein' driv home.'

'Yes, yes,' says he to the occupant of the barooch, 'I'll be with you, Margarit, in a jiffy; an' then in a distracted sort of way to Velvetiny:

'Honor alone restrains the fearless avowal hoverin' on my lips. That woman holds my fate in her hands—she is in failin' health—O heavens! what am I

thinkin' of? Has it come to this, that I should begrudge the poor thing the little remnant of life an' comfort allotted unto her for this world?'

'Mr. Pitkins,' broke in' the object of his remarks, after a dry, hackin' cough, 'do you mean to expose your wife to the danger of ketchin' her death o' cold in this damp, easterly breeze?'

At the mention of the word 'wife', Velvetiny sprung, as though she'd received a sharp an' suding blow, from the arm aginst which she'd been leanin' for support; an' the widder, who'd heard the ominous word as well, rushed to her daughter's aid, whisperin' in her ear:

'Call all your fortitude to your aid in this dire emergency. It's the part of a base double-dealer this married Lothario has been playin'; but do n't show that you are hurt, if you do n't want to be hurt still more, by the public voice that never spares a mistake in these matters, if made by a woman. Strengthen yourself by reflection that if he has been false to one woman, you have no guarantee for his provin' true to another. He shall have no chance for renewin' his criminal protestations. Bear up, poor child, an' I will git you safe out of the dilemma yit.'

'O that the earth would open an' swaller me, with all my mortifycation an' my misery!' gasped out Velvetiny, as white as this paper I'm writin' on.

I could n't help pityin' the poor thing, foolish as she'd acted, for she looked the very pictur of despair, as she stood tremblin', an' holdin' on to the widder for support.

The young man, too, was white as a sheet, as he took hold of the hand that seemed reachin' aimlessly for somethin' to cling to; an' says he, speakin' louder than he meant to, perhaps:

'If there's any sech thing as pity in this cruel, selfish world, prove it now. I never meant you any harm, an' if you go an' turn agin me, not a ray of sunlight will there be left in the firmament

above me. If ever I'm my own master agin, I'll prove to you that truth an' constancy—'

'What's that you are sayin'?' says Mrs. Pitkins, who'd got out o' the carriage an' approached us unperceived.

'I was doin' my best to contrive some remedy for this compound break-down,' says he, lookin' at the damidged waggun for the first time sence Velvetiny had been reskewed therefrom.

'How long have you been acquainted with these people?' says his sharp-eyed spouse, fixin' her gaze on the cowerin' Pitkins, who seemed inclined to slink off with as small an amount of explanation as would serve the needs of the occasion.

'I only know 'em by sight,' stammered he, 'an' not one of em' ever so much as heard me called by name, my dear, till you thus called me a few minits sence.'

At this sneakin' assertion, the widder fired up, an' says she:

'We supposed, my daughter an' myself, that he had some sufficin' reason for desirin' to keep his name a secret, an' that he would overcome his scruples, from whatever source they riz, revealin' his name an' station, on avowin' the attachment he has expressed in every way but words.'

'How can you stand dumb under sech a disgraceful an' imperdent allegation?' says the incensed Mrs. Pitkins to her liege lord an' master. 'Show the spirit of a man, an' deny the false charge, in the face of your accuser.'

Lookin' sorrowfully in Velvetiny's tearful eyes, the accused had n't a word to say for himself, an' sech a beratin' as he got from Mrs. Pitkins no more than served 'im right.

'Viper! that has feasted on my boun-ty, an' then turns to sting the hand of its benefactress,' says she with witherin' reproach, 'is this my return for raisin' you, so to speak, from the very dregs of society, feedin', clothin', edicatin', an' exaltin' you to be the honored sharer of my fortin an' my station? Brute! to

prove unworthy of the dotin' affection that has induced me to lavish on you sums that, if judiciously invested in the seven an' nine per cents, would have netted me returns that—'

Laughin' an' cryin', both at once, she stopped right in the middle of her sentence, an' we see she was in a violent fit of highsterics. Mrs. Ladlegilt held a bottle of strong-savored salt to her nose, while the penitent Pitkins helped her into the barooch with a great show of conjugal tenderness.

In the confusion that follered, nobody noticed poor Velvetiny, who'd fainted an' fell down the sand-bank.

The first words she spoke, on comin' to, was:

'I'll never have nothin' to say to another feller till I know who he is, an' whuther he's a single man or not.'

An' that's where I think she was right.

Mrs. Ladlegilt hired an empty hack, that was goin' past, to drive 'em to Parson Wolfsprong's; an' Hiram Grumet, who'd arriv at the scene of disaster, jumped on to Rawbones's back an' rid 'im to the blacksmith's, who grumbled at bein' called on to work by lamplight, while I footed it the whole blessed way home.

Do n't you think! that elder had the face to declare that he should charge me with the cost of repairin' the broken waggun, though it seemed to me that damidges ought to be awarded in my behalf, to pay for the resk I'd run of gittin' my neck broke, through the contrymindedness of the two vishus animals he'd loaned me.

Takin' Joe by the hand, I went back to the cottage feelin' down-hearted enough; but as I stepped inside the shady portico, all overrun by clamberin' honeysuckle, a strong arm stole about me, the only manly arm that ever, within my memory, did encircle my waste, an'—where's the need of tellin' of it?—the Capting had come; his last vyge is over, an' I have n't a care or a grief in the world.

undertook to be the reporter of your speeches, what have you got to tell me?"

"A great many wonderful adventures."

"Are there any dragons and enchanters? Are there any captive maidens imprisoned in turret chambers, and parents changed into swans, in your stories?"

"Certainly, and young people who take after their parents on a smaller scale, as ducks and geese."

"I don't want any stories with common ducks and geese. Go away, good bye!"

"Don't; you shall have necromancers and swans, and dragons, and captive maidens in turrets. Do please come, and bring your water colours."

"I will think about it when I have written my journal. You may come back for me when you have caught three fishes."

"Done!" said he, and the gondola shot away. In the meantime I have been making this important entry in my book, and, as he does not seem to have caught his fish, I shall put on my hat, though I am not the least impatient nor have looked many times out of the window. Indeed, I think it is a false alarm of papa's about my being in love at all. I have not by any means made up my mind. I might just as well have said two fishes or even one, for the fishes in the pond are fat, lazy old fishes, and are never hungry on a sunshiny day! How people do make up other people's minds for them, as if everybody else's affairs were so wonderfully simple and transparent. Even dear papa! Surely there is a vast difference between feeling a mere amiable disposition to like and loving! Surely love must come of knowledge, and knowledge of experience. But perhaps our modern society is so trimmed and pruned down, so snort of all its nature, that we are permitted to become acquainted only as with wax-work figures under glass cases, and venture only as far as liking? Are modesty and prudence so little to be trusted that prudery and cowardice are to supersede them? Are we to simper and take our chance, swaddled in plaid proprieties? No! by Juno! (for it would be unladylike to swear by Jove) I will be no simpering doll waded through plate glass by the semblance of a plausible dummy. The waxen mask must break or melt sooner or later. A timid fastidious reserve, worn until it is too late, smothers and disguises too many ill sorted human destinies. Cowardice and duplicity are the bane of life to men and women alike. Una's lion is only the type of a single-hearted woman's courage. I dare venture further than this liking if I see sufficient reason. I will make no giddy plunge like the cowardly, rash weaklings who lose their presence of mind on the edge of difficulty, and fling themselves headlong down the precipice, rather than endure the suspense of looking steadily over, to consider the jutting ledges and zigzag crevices which may yield a practicable foothold to climb safely down.

Is not this love a downward climbing from our high conceits—our *fastidios*?

"Come down, oh maid, from yonder mountain height,

What pleasure lies in height (the shepherd sang).

In height and cold, the splendour of the hills?

For love is of the valley—come thou down!

Love lies in meadow-velvet, foliage fringed,

Of Nature's broad green lap; nor cares to climb

With Death and morning on the silver horn."

So read the proud princess, if I remember right, from the volume of the poets of her land" in that "small sweet idyl" I hear him comin'. Will he say, "Come down, oh maid?"

CHAPTER XVI.—SOMETHING SERIOUS.

It will take a great deal of writing—and indeed, perhaps, I had better not write it at all. But "perhaps I had better not" is the watchword of indecision. And Indecision is that satirically housewife by whose fault chiefly the moth and the rust are allowed to make such dull work of life, corrupting all the gleam and gloss of earth's perishable treasures. Indeed, if "better not" were to have been my device, I had probably better not have said the greater part of my share of our conversation in the gondola. How difficult it is, too, to give anything like an idea of a conversation in writing. How spiritless and flat it always seems when the look and the tone are lost, and the briskness has all evaporated. Still, some day, when I look over these pages after many years, the recorded words of conversation will seem fresh and bright when the foolish setting of filigree reflections like these will be passed over as tarnished trumpery. Bits of human talk, if they are genuine and characteristic fragments of individual minds, keep their colour like the imperishable rubies and emeralds of Nature's laboratory; while the jeweller's gold we mix in our own crucible betrays its base alloy and affection.

There may no doubt be plenty of affection and folly in our talk also. But conversation keeps breaking the crystals as they are formed, and unconscious lights dash out of the fractures. They say on the stage nothing is so difficult as a soliloquy. And why? Who ever overheard anybody privately addressing himself in a sad speech, and who am I speaking to now? Perhaps to my future self, when I am the Mrs. Denizil of the possible future; when my husband, sitting at my elbow, rests his chin on my shoulder, and peeps over into this very page, and says, "Ah, silly child, did you think I could not guess your thoughts?" What will Mrs. Denizil then reply? "Dear, I wrote the record of my life as it went by, the best I could, for the pleasure of looking back into my youth!" To which he will reply, "Nonsense, dear wife! you mean the pleasure of looking forward!" Then I shall lay my hand over all this, and say, "Be quiet now, you mustn't read this silly stuff; pass on to that terrible conversation in the gondola, which is much more interesting."

"Then why did you waste your penwomanship on all that silly stuff; why did you not begin at once with the

TERrible CONVERSATION IN THE GONDOLA.

"You have been a long while catching your three fishes," said I, as I got into the boat, for want of something better to say, for a conversation must have a beginning."

"Almost as long as the three first centuries the jinn passed in the jar under the seal of Solomon—to me at least. But why did it seem so long to you?"

"Because you snapped the thread of my journal with your interruptions, and I lost the loom end of my thoughts in the ravel of your impertinencies. And it is tiresome hunting after one's thoughts."

"Is your life a tangled too? I supposed young ladies had their thoughts all nicely reeled on bobbins; and could wind off any length of any colour—especially pink. I have always understood that a young lady's pen goes as glibly as her crochet needle."

"Do you think all young ladies are exactly alike, that you presume to lay down a general law for the literary instincts of the creatures? I incline to believe that women have as much variety of character as men."

"You have me at a disadvantage till I get round the sharp

turn, while you sit with your wits under your parasol. Some of mine are managing the boat. But when we are moored quietly under the shadow of the elm—for that is my favourite view of the house, and the best fish lie there—when I have only to watch my float, and you are washing in your most artistic effects, then perhaps I shall have chance in the argument. Is it a serious argument on the female mind? I thought we were only talking nonsense to begin our conversation."

"Why should conversations begin with nonsense? and why should they end in argument? Surely any two human souls may find better employment than making silly grimaces at each other away from the truth—for I am certain argument never brings people nearer the truth."

"Conversations must almost always either begin in nonsense or truisms, and almost always end either in a difference of opinion, or a stagnant acquiescence in acknowledged common places. A little argument is wholesome batedore and shuttlecock exercise for minds. Do you find much amusement in talking to people who agree with every word you say? Will that get you any nearer truth?"

"Your talk is not half an inch deep. You are telling me words. Of course to any one who thinks in search of truth, a false acquiescence by way of politeness must be odious as all other falsehood is odious. Still there is something in the original meaning of *agréable*. The antagonistic element in conversation is a mistake."

"It is a great mistake not to be agreeable in conversation, and if you will wait one moment till I have tied the boat's head to this drooping bough, I will devote my whole attention to being as agreeable as my poor gifts will admit. There now; there is water in your painting tin, when you are ready to colour, and let me get my rod. Don't you think this is a good point of view? Well, how am I to begin to be agreeable?"

"Go on with the conversation, but don't argue."

"Then I must take your view, and enlarge upon your text, 'The antagonistic element in conversation is a mistake,' Maxime de la belle Clarel, extrait de la trente deuxième volume du son journal, page neuve cent quatre vingt dix huit, un chapitre intitulé, 'L'agréable en causeries c'est de chercher ensemble la vérité,' en évitant de se froisser mutuellement les émotions."

"Please speak English, and seriously. I don't like French nor *parlages*."

"Then why don't you say *parlages* in English?"

"Because I know no English for it but chaff, and that is a vulgar slang word, not fit for a lady to use."

"I don't like French very much either; nothing sounds earnest in French. But it is the neatest language for definitions, small essays, and conversational criticism."

"You seem to be beginning a small essay."

"I am beginning to converse on your own theory. I am about to tell you how much I agree with you. I believe, with you, that the pleasure of conversation, from the sociability of minds, consists, as you so well observe, in thinking together in search of truth; not always the matter of fact truth, which only concerns 'what is'; but sometimes, starting with the plain fact (beyond which the ultra practical people think it unnecessary to go), it is pleasant in the society of a kindred intelligence to untwine the prismatic strands of the seeming simple, pure-white ray of fact into the original colours of 'how it is'."

"Or even to go a step further, and dazzle that mysterious feature, 'the mind's eye,' at the blinding source of being, in a vain effort to reach the 'why it is.' Until we find, as the poets have said many times, we are a pair of silly moths, getting very little nearer our star; unless with singed wings we discover that we have been fatally mistaken, and that our star is a candle."

"In the meantime we have fluttered away from what we were saying. After all, our test of truth under its various phases (of which what we call beauty may probably be the most general) is more gathered from an involuntary conviction of the senses which cry within our hearts, and minds, and souls, 'this is true,' or 'that is false,' than from any self-directed reasoning process. We hardly ever use our reason to convince ourselves. We feel truth as we feel light or heat."

"I should say we feel it as a musical instrument, strung in tune, feels and answers to a note of the human voice uttered in its presence. The string which would, if struck, have yielded a kindred note to the ear, takes from the air a slender but perceptible vibration."

"Well said; and there you touch the heart of the question, to which I was coming by a more blundering and roundabout path than is opened by your happy illustration. Whatever is true and noble, vibrates from heart to heart, and has an eternal life in it that keeps its echoes for ever on the wing. Whatever is false and base falls dead and echoless. This seems to me the great proof of preponderant good in the world. High and worthy objects draw men together; low passions and self-ended motives keep them asunder. Every human being created in God's own image must have something divine in his nature, however he may have distorted its features from the innate likeness by crime. Those who link most closely with their kind, most clearly discover that this original likeness is the link which binds society together. Sympathy is the electric spark which marks the passage of truth from mind to mind. Therefore it is that in mental companionship, when parallel minds strike out at points of union they are sure to be tending towards. The baiting places on the road of truth are not houses of discord—no noisy brawlers and contentious spirits go that way. 'Peace be within these walls,' is written over these portals. Goodfellow in the jovial landlord, and Gentleheart the smiling hostess, who welcome the gay, cheerful wayfarers to that happy land whose everlasting mountains piled in the far horizon seem nearer and nearer as sunset after sunset wreathes their heaven-touching heights with rosy splendour. Blessed is he who makes that journey hand-in-hand with one, whose—Here a fish took the bait, which caused an interruption. I was partly angry with the fish and partly grateful to him—for though interested, I felt a little nervous as about what the eloquent passage might lead to."

"He is a perch," said Mr. Denizil, "and only very lightly hooked," as after a little resistance the fish came up to the surface gasping and looking very foolish. "If we don't mind he'll be off." I felt a little sorry for him, and was glad (when Mr. Denizil got up) to see the victim make a flicker and get loose. He seemed hardly aware of his freedom at first, but was just in time to escape the landing net.

"If perchies take counsel together in searches of truth, we shall not catch many after this one has communicated with his friends."

"Unless perchies are wiser than men, his brother fishes will not take advantage of his experience. And even he himself may very likely remember the taste of the bait after he has forgotten the barb of the hook. I am afraid men and fishes grow wise very slowly, even on their own experience of life. As to other people's experience that is in about as much esteem as second-hand clothes."

EDITH CLAREL.

A STORY FROM THREE POINTS OF VIEW.

By William Makepeace Thackeray

CHAPTER XVI.

(From the Pink Book.)

It shows no signs as yet of being anything like true love. It runs too smooth by far. How is it that in novels there are always such difficulties to be got over? How the poor novelists must beat their brains for combinations, and situations, and adventures, and escapes, and heart-rending scenes, which are always more or less absurd and contradictory after all. What nonsense it is to say that real life is stranger than all. I can't succeed in getting a rise out of real life at all. According to rule my parents ought to be hard-hearted enough to lock me up in one of the turret attics till I consented to marry Mr. Tremaddock. A carrier-pigeon should bring me tidings of my love lying wounded in the bower of a rival enchantress. Or there should be a necromancer in possession of Ossombe, making himself quite at home, like a sheriff's officer, after having turned papa and mamma into that restless pair of swans. Why are there no fire-breathing dragons on the bridge beneath my window—I hear the sound of the car—and he is singing his Greek love songs in perfectly good spirits. The wretch! That is to let me know he is coming round under my window— and I am expected to look out—dear me! the window is open—not it! it would certainly be foolish to look out. The car and the song pause! surely he will not say anything unless I go—that would be foolish of him. What is that flashing before the window? and a patterning of drops on the panes!

"Fie! sir; are these your Venetian manners, to flourish your car-blades in my face, and splash my panes!"

"Are you there, haughty maiden, to repel my aspersions? Methought your mignonette seemed thirsty in this sultry weather."

"Did you think that the literature of my journal was dry too? for you have watered that as well, besides quenching the *feu de la composition* with your moist water."

"Pardon me my moist; consider how many beams are in your own eye."

"Is this the profanely garbled text with which you sprinkle me with unholly water?"

"The water which encircles your abode to me seems sacred."

"If you mean to serenade me in blank verse, the sooner I about my window the better."

"I go to troll for carp in the lagoon."

"If you troll with a blank line you will hook no carp."

"I troll my lines whereat thyself dost carp."

"Horace says, *Carpio, et wea*, and we are wasting the day. Go and catch your carp—I have to write my journal."

"What can have happened since breakfast to put in you journal? It is a shame to stay in the house this weather. Come and make me the sketch you promised me, while I catch my fish and tell you something worth putting in you journal."

"Oh, I dare say! I should have a pretty occupation if

"The second-hand clothes of princes become robes of honour on the backs of their subjects; and surely the experience of greater minds than our own is worth something even at second-hand. Why do statesmen study history? Why do the evangelical people read very dull memoirs of plough persons whose lives are almost entirely composed of 'experiences'? Why do the worldly people take so much interest in personal gossip about individuals whom they neither love nor hate, the recorded incidents in whose lives are but little livelier and less edifying than those of the saints? Why do the romantic people plod through volumes of dull and improbable novels, unless for experience? It is that men take an interest in all things human; and I believe that interest is to be chiefly their curiosity to see how human beings will act under a variety of circumstances in order to compare notes with their own imagination as to how they would themselves have acted or may hereafter act, under similar circumstances. The worst of experience at second-hand is, that history, memoir, gossip, and romance, are all about equally false. How interesting would a life be if human beings dared to speak out to one another! If I dare tell you, or you dare tell me a few of the things that float on the top of our memories, but which never touch our lips, how much more interesting it would be than this vapid talk which has been said over and over again by thousands of worthy persons who dare venture no further than common-place!"

"Our inner lives are so mixed of opposite ingredients, where good and bad contend like acid and alkali, that it is no wonder the effervescence only brings to the surface common-place bubbles of a neutral saltish flavour, tolerably brisk at the moment, soon flat, and after a while totally insipid. Still the common places of life are considered wholesome; and the first taste is not unpleasant. Certainly the drags remind us of the soap saucer out of which in our infancy we blew those practical bubbles that make so principal a figure in the metaphorical allusions of after years. Used you to be fond of blowing bubbles in your youth?"

"Of course I was. We used to blow bubbles for hours and hours on the balcony of our palace, and see them float away and burst; and some of them would last till they touched the water of the canal. I wonder where he is, and what sort of bubbles he is blowing now!"

"Who?" said Mr. Denzil, looking at me with rather a searching look, and the tone of his monosyllable made me look up from my drawing.

"Prince Vladimir Rylskoi," said I.

"He is attached at Constantinople. How do you happen to know him?"

"We blew bubbles from the same saucer at Venice long ago. The princess Rylskoi lived at the other end of our balcony. He was a pretty boy, with long, straight, yellow hair, cut square on his shoulders like the silk of a tassel. He wore a military-looking fur cap, a crimson velvet tunic with a golden belt, loose white Turkish pantaloons, and red morocco boots up to the knee. He could blow larger bubbles than I could, and I respected him. He was generous to me with sugar-almonds, and I valued his friendship. But once, when I had broken my pipe in flinging off a bubble over the balcony-railing (which was rather high), and was the means of decapitating more pipes than my nurse approved), Vladimir came and wiped my tears and gave me his own, a very handsome pipe enamelled with forget-me-nots, that had survived at least half-a-dozen of my common ones—I give him my whole heart. How he cried at our last separation. I have never heard of him since. He was eight and I was seven. Do you think this is sentimental nonsense, that you shake your head? Or that children cannot love with all their hearts? Children are men and women as far as their souls."

"I fear our bodies and minds more and more outgrow and baffle their poor little delicate sister, the longer that triple association which we call an individual remnant undissolved."

"If that be so, the sooner we die the better—nay, we had better never have been born, which was the strongest thing the evangelist found to say about Judas Iscariot. What are we in the world for, if it be not a school for souls; and to say that all or most of the scholars deteriorate under the discipline implies that Ahrlman is the school master. What is becoming of your theory of preponderant good in the world?"

"You are taking an unfair advantage of me. You bind me over not to argue; and then, when my elbows are pinioned, you turn to me about the head. I will confess I have said things which contradict each other. The juice of the sugar-cane seems a pure, sweet, innocent liquid. But between the original growth and the sparry crystals which glisten on the test-tables of fashion, what ordeals it has to undergo. There is the crushing of the cane, the seething of the boiler. It must be clarified with clotted blood, and drained through grimy filters of charred bones. The seeming purity of childhood has within it all the undeveloped refuse of human baseness, and all the dormant madness of passion, as the cane-sap contains the element of rum and treacle as well as of lump-sugar."

"Sugar, Mr. Speaker. Will anybody dare to laugh at sugar now? So you think that the sin and shame of life clarify the spiritual syrup. That seems to me a dangerous doctrine. For the purest lives will come out more brown muscovado if your strict purifying ordeal be necessary to fine crystallization. I have been accustomed to think it wisdom 'to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.' But perhaps you think there ought to be one law for women and another 'or men'?"

"I don't know that I think there ought to be, but I think practically there is. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine the utter bankruptcy in morals which men would reach if it were not for the inexcusableness of female purity, handed down from mother to daughter, whose influence redeems the confused conscience of one generation, and lays a wholesale foundation in the hearts of another: a foundation which sits and folly may overlay and smother for a time, but cannot root up and erase. The foundation that is laid by the mother is built on by the wife."

"You lay a very promising ground-plan for mothers and wives to build on. The nest-constraining instinct must be very strong to make them build at all."

"No doubt it is, for nests there be. But it is very possible that if they all knew exactly what awaited them, there would not be quite so many. But the same thing is true of all human affairs. If men and women knew beforehand what would be the result of anything they proposed to do, they would seldom take the trouble of doing it. It is the headstrong blindness of mortals that works out the intention of Providence. We set about all sorts of endeavours with brilliant anticipation of what will come of it. The anticipation turns out a delusion invariably; but something comes of the adventure. Something which seems next to nothing in the hour of our disappointment, but which proves to have its value in the end. We all begin life with the idea, that by some superior skill in management, or some special good fortune, we are to escape the griefs and heart-burnings and disappointments of which our elders tell us life is full; and to see

an extraordinary proportion of earth's brightest treasures, which are said to be so thickly sprinkled, and even when the fairest prize falls to our lot, we are very little better contented. So say the wise people at least, and I believe most of it except the last item. For I think it must be a very thankless nature that is not satisfied with the beat that is to be had."

"What is the beat?"

"Happiness."

"And what may happiness be, and what is it made of?"

"Faith, hope, and charity. Faith, to begin with; charity, to go on with; and hope, to look forward to."

"That is a very Scriptural receipt, but, speaking in human language, if you had three wishes, what would you ask for?"

"A happy home, the will and the power to do good in this world, and a steadfast hope in the world to come."

"What is a happy home?"

"You ask me short questions like the Catechism. That will take a good deal of answering."

"You ought to be very much flattered that I condescend to catch you, and gratified that I have not confused any of your definitions. Besides, I am making you a nice picture of my own happy home, on the understanding that you were to amuse me while I painted. You are making a mere pretence of catching fish. You have not had a rise for the last half hour. Look at your hook to see if there is any bait on it, and tell me what is a happy home directly."

"A happy home is an exceptional establishment, where the wife is always obedient and the husband is never domineering. Where the children never cut their teeth or have the measles, and the servants never get drunk or give warning. Where neither the master of the house has a latch key and a dinner bill at his club, nor the mistress has a taste for cold mutton and washing days."

"You needn't go any further. I am quite satisfied that the description is accurate," said I, with some asperity I suppose, for he looked up at me with so amiable and comical a look of intelligence, that I was forced to smile too for a moment; and then, feeling that I had shown a silly disappointment and ill-humour at his breaking out of the serious tone, I looked down and became very busy with my drawing; and the weather appeared suddenly to grow more oppressively sultry. "A happy home is an exceptional establishment, where the wife is always obedient and the husband is never domineering. Where the children never cut their teeth or have the measles, and the servants never get drunk or give warning. Where neither the master of the house has a latch key and a dinner bill at his club, nor the mistress has a taste for cold mutton and washing days."

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"Don't be angry with me; unless you wish to make me very unhappy; I hope my indiscretion is pardonable," and he looked so sorry, and spoke so kind and tender a tone, that, though the words were foolish enough (for it was I who had been indiscreet, and not he) the foolish words touched me. I wished to say that I was not angry; and to make some common-place remark, as if nothing was the matter; but I could neither think of the common-place remark, nor even find my voice to say I was not angry. Moreover, I did not look up, though I felt his eyes were looking at me for the suppositionless forgiveness he had mentioned. And I am ashamed to say I believe I blushed a little. I hope he did not observe it, for he turned away at the moment, with a scarcely audible sigh. I dared not meet his eyes; for I knew there was a dangerous expression in them for me to look at, and felt certain that if I looked up there would be something in mine that would lead to a premature crisis of some sort. There was rather a formidable pause. At last he said, "I wonder how much longer acquaintance it would take us to become perfect strangers again."

"Till we grow intimate enough to venture on a desperate quarrel."

"Heaven forbid! But what is intimacy, and how does intimacy grow? It seems to me to recede with the advance of acquaintance. We have grown more distant and cautious in our conversation day by day. We used not to be afraid of one another's criticisms. It seems to me I remember all sorts of wild rambling talk that ran on freely and boldly without thinking about it, very different from the set phrases and solemn intervals of silence, which have come over our present interview for instance."

"It is easier to talk freely and familiarly on indifferent subjects with a mere acquaintance, than to discuss the origin and course of intimacy with a friend, who is pleased to mix a slight tone of reproach with his inquiries. Neither friendship nor intimacy grow any faster for being in too great a hurry." I am afraid my sentence faltered a little before the word friend, and that I quickened my pace nervously; so that with a view of effacing what might seem an opening, I fell into the very hurry I was depressing, and said an ill-advised thing. He was not disconcerted, but seemed a little hurt. He looked at me with a steadfast, sad expression, and said,—

"It is too late for good advice when I have already given you cause to bestow it upon me. I may have been in too great a hurry. That is past and done with. The time is come for me to speak openly when your friendly warning shows me I have already betrayed myself. I have no wonderful news to tell you—no profound secret—neither a secret nor news at all!" While he was saying all this, which he pronounced slowly and with a determined though rather treacherous calmness of manner, I felt a giddy sensation as if the gondola was being twirled round and round in the innermost rings of Macbethon, and I was tempted to leap headlong into the water and escape at all hazards. Then I thought of getting up and commanding him to row me home instantly, but I felt I could not summon a sufficiently impudent manner. I felt his sad, serious eyes watching me as I looked at my drawing, which seemed of all the colours of the rainbow in unutterable confusion, and with which I forgot even to make the faintest pretence of being in the least occupied; so that I took no steps of any kind, and he went on. "It may, perhaps, be my very great misfortune, but till you finally forbid me to hope it will be my only happiness to love you—the sole object of my life to win and to deserve your love in return. I have not the folly or presumption to suppose for a moment, that I am worthy of such a treasure, but I have resolved to set my heart and life on the turn of this precious venture. I tell you this thus formally, not because I suppose it will be new to you, but because till it has been said there is a sense of something smothered, something to be avoided and ignored, some suspicion of ungentleness and evasion, which tends to sully friendship and widen the distance between us; for you have confessed friendship. And though I risk its loss by what may seem a rash declaration, I think open, straightforward measures are less dangerous than faltering hesitation and reserve. Forgive me the trouble and embarrassment I have caused you. Tell me if you can give me any hope; but even if you cannot, do not too hastily condemn me to despair." I felt very thankful to my good stars that he did not stop short and wait for an answer immediately after his declaration, for I don't know what I should have said. But directly that was

over, a cheerful glow of courage sprung up in my heart. My nerves recovered from their flurry, and the cloud cleared away from my eyes. I felt that I was mistress of the situation, not without a certain naughty sense of triumph over my suppliant captive. I ventured to look up. His eyes were full of a tender, earnest anxiety, which occasioned me some slight compunction for the cool and rather hard-hearted answer I was meditating. I suppose, however, that I did not look very severe or discouraging, for he leaned forward and took one of my hands, saying, "Let me swear my allegiance!" But when he made as if he would kiss it, I drew away my hand, and said, "No! that will not do, Mr. Denzil. You have spoken plainly, though rashly to me, and I forgive you for your rashness. Indeed, I suppose I have very little to forgive; for I have no power to prevent you from loving me if you are inclined enough to do so. But if I were to be indignant with you for telling me so civilly. But if I were to permit you to kiss my hand, that would be a sign on my part of accepting your allegiance."

"Oh! then let me kiss your hand!" said he, in an imploring tone that went very near to my heart, and I was almost inclined to yield. But my reflections of a day or two ago came to my aid. "Now," said I to myself, "the romance of courtship is beginning. Now is my time to see how he will be under difficulties!" So I kept my hands resolutely out of reach, and said, "Listen to me, Mr. Denzil. I said you spoke rashly, but I believe you spoke honestly to me. It is now my turn to speak plainly, though I hope prudently, to you, if there be any prudence at all in going on with this conversation. I have no personal experience in scenes of this kind, but, from what I have read in books, I think the recognised course for a young lady under such circumstances would be, to say nothing, and go away at once in a foolish flutter. Perhaps if I followed my cowardly instincts, that is what I might do. But I see no real reason to be afraid. Indeed, I have perfect confidence that you will hear me directly, and I think there is some truth in your view, that there is less danger in speaking out and cutting through a difficulty with sharp words than in leaving it entangled in doubt or smothered in silence."

"A thousand thanks! At any rate you are treating me with confidence, and as a friend. Speak as plainly as you like, I feel sure you will deal reasonably, and I hope not very harshly, with my misdeeds."

"Do not be too sure of that. I will be as reasonable as I can, but I fear you will think me hard-hearted, and ungrateful for the honour you have done in offering me your heart, with what I, at present, must consider an indiscreet gesture. Men, I believe, are apt to think women of a simpler mechanism than we think ourselves. You may fancy you know me sufficiently to be sure you love me. I know myself well enough to be nearly certain that if you knew all the shifts and turns of my character you would be much less sublimely enthusiastic in your estimate. Ah! I see you think your male penetration of intellect is infallible. Well, allowing that you are right, or nearly right, in supposing that I should not disappoint you on more intimate acquaintance, granted that a young and moderately innocent girl, who has no previous history but the nursery and school-room, is easily deciphered and read almost at sight, granted that her nature is pliable—for that very reason, if for no other, marriage is to the woman a much more serious thing than to the man. Your character is formed; your life is already complicated with a mass of previous experience. What do I know of your character? I have heard you talk like an honest, available, and intelligent man. But I have been told many men talk pleasantly who turn out very little better than their neighbours, and that deeds, not words, are the proof of character."

"You will not judge me at all over severely, if you estimate me according to your theory. I am very little better than my neighbours."

"I hope you are a great deal better, but it remains to be proved. Then I must hear your previous experience. Ah! you wince a little at that. I must hear how you have acted, you will have the advantage of being your own historian. I must see how you act under your present unfortunate circumstances, which I am already beginning and am resolved to make as distressing as possible, and in which I shall live the advantage of being my own witness. After nearly as many years of galling bondage as Jacob went through for Rachel's sake, I shall perhaps be able to give you an answer, if your patience should have held out long enough. In the meantime I neither accept you nor reject you. I will receive no proffered allegiance on your part, nor will I entertain the slightest shadow of even the most provisional traction of an engagement on mine. Things are as they were, with the exception that you have made a rash declaration, which I have, with perhaps equal imprudence, condoned. I impose no conditions of eternal silence on the subject. You can tell me as much of your history as you please, and I shall be better able to see your faults when your good behaviour wears a little threadbare. Now, sir, are you satisfied? and have I spoken plain enough to suit you?"

"I am satisfied. You have spoken out like a man. I begin to be seriously afraid you are a strong minded woman."

"That is a severe rebuke. But I meant to show you a little of the prosaic side of my character. Your disreputable will go on prosperously. I see you already begin to love me less devotedly."

"If we are to continue in this castle of truth I may be permitted to say, that your judgment delivered in my suit is a little too judicial to be quite feminine—a little too reasonable to be quite practicable—a little too prudent to be quite safe. It differs materially from the wisdom of our ancestors and antecedents in similar cases laid down; and, though I cannot at the moment detect the precise flaw which will make it crumble to pieces, I feel morally sure that it will divide me from joy or grief much less permanently than is argued by the scheme itself. But why should I love you less for getting over a difficulty, which might have been a stumbling block, by a bold and ingenious scheme which will have served its turn probably before it breaks?"

"You said I spoke out like a man, and you feared I was a strong-minded woman, and you said it as if there was bitterness. My voice faltered a little, and I suddenly became aware that I had been speaking under excitement, and that I had said things that were in very bad taste. I had received his love with a pretence of indifferent levity that was both false, and cruel, and unwomanly. What if he really did think worse of me—if he really did love me less! I knew by the deadly sinking at my heart that I loved him. The tears swam in my eyes, and all my mind seemed darkened. I felt that he had moved near me, that he had taken my hand, and was covering it with kisses. I had no strength to withdraw it—and the next moment I found myself leaning on his breast, and sobbing convulsively, like a silly heart-

broken child I cannot imagine how my sense of shame could have been so smothered in weakness, nor can I describe the gentle and loving tenderness with which he consoled and quieted me, as if I had been a child. When I recovered myself, I was surprised not to feel ashamed, but happy. He had seen my weakness, but he was no longer a stranger. So ended that terrible conversion in the gondola.

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MISS MARJORIBANKS.

PART I.—CHAPTER I.

MISS MARJORIBANKS lost her mother when she was only fifteen, and when, to add to the misfortune, she was absent at school, and could not have it in her power to soothe her dear mamma's last moments, as she herself said. Words are sometimes very poor exponents of such an event: but it happens now and then, on the other hand, that a plain intimation expresses too much, and suggests emotion and suffering which, in reality, have but little, if any, existence. Mrs. Marjoribanks, poor lady, had been an invalid for many years; she had grown a little peevish in her loneliness, not feeling herself of much account in this world. There are some rare natures that are content to acquiesce in the general neglect, and forget themselves when they find themselves forgotten; but it is unfortunately much more usual to take the plan adopted by Mrs. Marjoribanks, who devoted all her powers, during the last ten years of her life, to the solacement and care of that poor self which other people neglected. The consequence was, that when she disappeared from her sofa—except from the mere physical fact that she was no longer there—no one, except her maid, whose occupation was gone, could have found out much difference. Her husband, it is true, who had, somewhere, hidden deep in some secret corner of his physical organization the remains of a heart, experienced a certain sentiment of sadness when he re-entered the house from which she had gone away for ever. But Dr. Marjoribanks was too busy a man to waste his feelings on a mere sentiment. His daughter, however, was only fifteen, and had floods of tears at her command, as was natural at that age. All the way home she revolved the situation in her mind, which was considerably enlightened by novels and popu-

lar philosophy—for the lady at the head of Miss Marjoribank's school was a devoted admirer of "Friends in Council," and was fond of bestowing that work as a prize, with pencil-marks on the margin—so that Lucilla's mind had been cultivated, and was brimful of the best of sentiments. She made up her mind on her journey to a great many virtuous resolutions; for, in such a case as hers, it was evidently the duty of an only child to devote herself to her father's comfort, and become the sunshine of his life, as so many young persons of her age have been known to become in literature. Miss Marjoribanks had a lively mind, and was capable of grasping all the circumstances of the situation at a glance. Thus between the outbreaks of her tears for her mother, it became apparent to her that she must sacrifice her own feelings, and make a cheerful home for papa, and that a great many changes would be necessary in the household—changes which went so far as even to extend to the furniture. Miss Marjoribanks sketched to herself, as she lay back in the corner of the railway carriage, with her veil down, how she would wind herself up to the duty of presiding at her papa's dinner-parties, and charming everybody by her good-humour, and brightness, and devotion to his comfort; and how, when it was all over, she would withdraw and cry her eyes out in her own room, and be found in the morning languid and worn-out, but always heroic, ready to go down-stairs and assist at her dear papa's breakfast, and keep up her smiles for him till he had gone out to his patients. Altogether the picture was a very pretty one; and considering that a great many young ladies in deep mourning put force upon their feelings in novels, and maintain a smile for the benefit of the observant male creatures of whom they have the charge, the idea was not at all extra-

gant, considering that Miss Marjoribanks was but fifteen. She was not, however, exactly the kind of figure for this *mise en scène*. When her schoolfellows talked of her to their friends—for Lucilla was already an important personage at Mount Pleasant—the most common description they gave of her was, that she was “a large girl,” and there was great truth in the adjective. She was not to be described as a tall girl—which conveys an altogether different idea—but she was large in all particulars, full and well developed, with somewhat large features, not at all pretty as yet, though it was known in Mount Pleasant that somebody had said that such a face might ripen into beauty, and become “grandiose,” for anything anybody could tell. Miss Marjoribanks was not vain; but the word had taken possession of her imagination, as was natural, and solaced her much when she made the painful discovery that her gloves were half a number larger, and her shoes a hairbreadth broader than those of any of her companions; but the hands and the feet were both perfectly well shaped; and being at the same time well clothed and plump, were much more presentable and pleasant to look upon than the lean rudimentary school-girl hands with which they were surrounded. To add to these excellences, Lucilla had a mass of hair which, if it could but have been cleared a little in its tint, would have been golden, though at present it was nothing more than tawny, and curly to exasperation. She wore it in large thick curls, which did not, however, float, or wave, or do any of the graceful things which curls ought to do; for it had this aggravating quality, that it would not grow long, but would grow ridiculously, unmanageably thick, to the admiration of her companions, but to her own despair, for there was no knowing what to do with those short but ponderous locks. These were the external characteristics of the girl who was going home to be a comfort to her widowed father, and meant to sacrifice herself to his happiness. In the course of her rapid journey she had already settled upon everything that had to be done; or rather, to speak more truly, had rehearsed everything according to the habit already acquired by a quick mind, a good deal occupied with itself. First she meant to fall into her father's arms—forgetting, with that singular facility for overlooking the peculiarities of others which belongs to such a character, that Dr. Marjoribanks was very little given to embracing, and that a hasty kiss on her forehead was the warmest caress he had ever given his daughter—and then to rush up to the

chamber of death and weep over dear mamma. “And to think I was not there to soothe her last moments!” Lucilla said to herself, with a sob, and with feelings sufficiently real in their way. After this, the devoted daughter made up her mind to come down-stairs again, pale as death, but self-controlled, and devote herself to papa. Perhaps, if great emotion should make him tearless, as such cases had been known, Miss Marjoribanks would steal into his arms unawares, and so surprise him into weeping. All this went briskly through her mind, undeterred by the reflection that tears were as much out of the Doctor's way as embraces; and in this mood she sped swiftly along in the inspiration of his first sorrow, as she imagined, but in reality to suffer her first disappointment, which was of a less soothing character than that mild and manageable grief.

When Miss Marjoribanks reached home her mother had been dead for twenty-four hours; and her father was not at the door to receive her as she had expected, but by the bedside of a patient in extremity, who could not consent to go out of the world without the Doctor. This was a sad reversal of her intentions, but Lucilla was not the woman to be disconcerted. She carried out the second part of her programme without either interference or sympathy, except from Mrs. Marjoribanks's maid, who had some hopes from the moment of her arrival. “I can't abide to think as I'm to be parted from you all, miss,” sobbed the faithful attendant. “I've lost the best missus as ever was, and I shouldn't mind going after her. Whenever any one gets a good friend in this world, they're the first to be took away,” said the weeping handmaiden, who naturally saw her own loss in the most vivid light. “Ah, Ellis,” cried Miss Marjoribanks, reposing her sorrow in the arms of this anxious attendant, “we must try to be a comfort to poor papa!”

With this end Lucilla made herself very troublesome to the sober-minded Doctor during those few dim days before the faint and daily lessening shadow of poor Mrs. Marjoribanks was removed altogether from the house. When that sad ceremony had taken place, and the Doctor returned, serious enough, heaven knows, to the great house, where the faded helpless woman, who had notwithstanding been his love and his bride in other days, lay no longer on the familiar sofa, the crisis arrived which Miss Marjoribanks had rehearsed so often, but after quite a different fashion. The widower was tearless, indeed, but not from excess of emotion

On the contrary, a painful heaviness possessed him when he became aware how little real sorrow was in his mind, and how small an actual loss was this loss of his wife, which bulked before the world as an event of just as much magnitude as the loss, for example, which poor Mr. Lake, the drawing-master, was at the same moment suffering. It was even sad, in another point of view, to think of a human creature passing out of the world, and leaving so little trace that she had ever been there. As for the pretty creature whom Dr. Marjoribanks had married, she had vanished into thin air years and years ago. These thoughts were heavy enough — perhaps even more overwhelming than that grief which develops love to its highest point of intensity. But such were not precisely the kind of reflections which could be solaced by paternal *attendrissement* over a weeping and devoted daughter. It was May, and the weather was warm for the season; but Lucilla had caused the fire to be lighted in the large gloomy library where Dr. Marjoribanks always sat in the evenings, with the idea that it would be "a comfort" to him; and, for the same reason, she had ordered tea to be served there, instead of the dinner, for which her father, as she imagined, could have little appetite. When the Doctor went in to his favourite seclusion, tired and heated and sad — for even on the day of his wife's funeral the favourite doctor of Carlingford had patients to think of — the very heaviness of his thoughts gave warmth to his indignation. He had longed for the quiet and the coolness and the solitude of his library, apart from everybody; and when he found it radiant with firelight, tea set on the table, and Lucilla crying by the fire, in her new crape, the effect upon a temper by no means perfect may be imagined. The unfortunate man threw both the windows wide open and rang the bell violently, and gave instant orders for the removal of the unnecessary fire and the tea-service. "Let me know when dinner is ready," he said in a voice like thunder, and if Miss Marjoribanks wants a fire, let it be lighted in the drawing-room." Lucilla was so much taken by surprise by this sudden overthrow of her programme, that she submitted, as a girl of much less spirit might have done, and suffered herself and her fire and her tea-things to be dismissed up-stairs, where she wept still more at sight of dear mamma's sofa, and where Ellis came to mingle her tears with those of her young mistress, and to beg dear Miss Lucilla, for the sake of her precious 'elth and her dear papa, to be persuaded to take some tea. On the whole,

master stood lessened in the eyes of all the household by his ability to eat his dinner, and his resentment at having his habitudes disturbed. "Them men would eat and drink if we was all in our graves," said the indignant cook, who indeed had a real grievance; and the outraged sentiment of the kitchen was avenged by a bad and hasty dinner, which the Doctor, though generally "very particular," swallowed without remark. About an hour afterwards he went up-stairs to the drawing-room, where Miss Marjoribanks was waiting for him, much less at ease than she had expected to be. Though he gave a little sigh at the sight of his wife's sofa, he did not hesitate to sit down upon it, and even to draw it a little out of its position, which, as Lucilla described afterwards, was like a knife going into her heart. Though, indeed, she had herself decided already, in the intervals of her tears, that the drawing-room furniture had got very faded and shabby, and that it would be very expedient to have it renewed for the new reign of youth and energy which was about to commence. As for the Doctor, though Miss Marjoribanks thought him insensible, his heart was heavy enough. His wife had gone out of the world without leaving the least mark of her existence, except in that large girl, whose spirits and forces were unbounded, but whose discretion at the present moment did not seem much greater than her mother's. Instead of thinking of her as a comfort, the Doctor felt himself called upon to face a new and unexpected embarrassment. It would have been a satisfaction to him just then to have been left to himself, and permitted to work on quietly at his profession, and to write his papers for the "Lancet," and to see his friends now and then when he chose; for Dr. Marjoribanks was not a man who had any great need of sympathy by nature, or who was at all addicted to demonstrations of feeling; consequently, he drew his wife's sofa a little further from the fire, and took his seat on it soberly, quite unaware that, by so doing, he was putting a knife into his daughter's heart.

"I hope you have had something to eat, Lucilla," he said; "don't get into that foolish habit of flying to tea as a man flies to a dram. It's a more innocent stimulant, but it's the same kind of intention. I am not so much against a fire; it has always a kind of cheerful look."

"Oh, papa," cried his daughter, with a flood of indignant tears, "you can't suppose I want anything to look cheerful this dreadful day."

"I am far from blaming you, my dear,"

said the doctor; "it is natural you should cry. I am sorry I did not write for my sister to come, who would have taken care of you; but I dislike strangers in the house at such a time. However, I hope, Lucilla, you will soon feel yourself able to return to school; occupation is always the best remedy, and you will have your friends and companions"—

"Papa!" cried Miss Marjoribanks, and then she summoned courage, and rushed up to him, and threw herself and her clouds of rapture on the carpet at his side (and it may here be mentioned that Lucilla had seized the opportunity to have her mourning made *long*, which had been the desire of her heart, baffled by mamma and governess for at least a year). "Papa!" she exclaimed with fervour, raising to him her tear stained face, and clasping her fair plump hands, "oh, don't send me away! I was only a silly girl the other day, but *this* has made me a woman. Though I can never, never hope to take dear mamma's place, and be—all—that she was to you, still I feel I can be a comfort to you if you will let me. You shall not see me cry any more," cried Lucilla with energy, rubbing away her tears. "I will never give way to my feelings. I will ask for no companions—nor—nor anything. As for pleasure, that is all over. Oh, papa, you shall never see me regret anything, or wish for anything. I will give up everything in the world to be a comfort to you!"

This address, which was utterly unexpected, drove Dr. Marjoribanks to despair. He said, "Get up, Lucilla;" but the devoted daughter knew better than to get up. She hid her face in her hands, and rested her hands upon her mother's sofa, where the Doctor was sitting; and the sobs of that emotion which she meant to control henceforward, echoed through the room. "It is only for this once—I can—cannot help it," she cried.

When her father found that he could neither soothe her, nor succeed in raising her, he got up himself, which was the only thing left to him, and began to walk about the room with hasty steps. Her mother, too, had possessed this dangerous faculty of tears; and it was not wonderful if the sober-minded Doctor, roused for the first time to consider his little girl as a creature possessed of individual character, should recognize, with a thrill of dismay, the appearance of the same qualities which had wearied his life out, and brought his youthful affections to an untimely end. Lucilla was, it is true, as different from her mother as summer from winter; but Dr. Marjoribanks had no means of knowing that his daughter was only doing

her duty by him in his widowhood, according to a programme of filial devotion resolved upon, in accordance with the best models, some days before.

Accordingly, when her sobs had ceased, her father returned and raised her up not unkindly, and placed her in her chair. In doing so, the Doctor put his finger by instinct upon Lucilla's pulse, which was sufficiently calm and well regulated to reassure the most anxious parent. And then a furtive momentary smile gleamed for a single instant round the corners of his mouth.

"It is very good of you to propose sacrificing yourself for me," he said; "and if you would sacrifice your excitement in the mean time, and listen to me quietly, it would really be something—but you are only fifteen, Lucilla, and I have no wish to take you from school just now; wait till I have done. Your poor mother is gone, and it is very natural you should cry; but you were a good child to her on the whole, which will be a comfort to you. We did everything that could be thought of to prolong her days, and, when that was impossible, to lessen what she had to suffer; and we have every reason to hope," said the Doctor, as indeed he was accustomed to say in the exercise of his profession to mourning relatives, "that she's far better off now than if she had been with us. When that is said, I don't know that there is anything more to add. I am not fond of sacrifices, either one way or another; and I've a great objection to any one making a sacrifice for me"—

"But, oh papa, it would be no sacrifice," said Lucilla, "if you would only let me be a comfort to you!"

"That is just where it is, my dear," said the steady Doctor; "I have been used to be left a great deal to myself; and I am not prepared to say that the responsibility of having you here without a mother to take care of you, and all your lessons interrupted, would not neutralize any comfort you might be. You see," said Dr. Marjoribanks, trying to soften matters a little, "a man is what his habits make him; and I have been used to be left a great deal to myself. It answers in some cases, but I doubt if it would answer with me."

And then there was a pause, in which Lucilla wept and stifled her tears in her handkerchief, with a warmer flood of vexation and disappointment than even her natural grief had produced. "Of course, papa, if I can't be any comfort—I will—go back to school," she sobbed, with a touch of sullessness which did not escape the Doctor's ear.

"Yes, my dear, you will certainly go back to school," said the peremptory father; I never had any doubt on that subject. You can stay over Sunday and rest yourself. Monday or Tuesday will be time enough to go back to Mount Pleasant; and now you had better ring the bell, and get somebody to bring you something—or I'll see to that when I go down-stairs. It's getting late, and this has been a fatiguing day. I'll send you up some negus, and I think you had better go to bed."

And with these commonplace words, Dr. Marjoribanks withdrew in calm possession of the field. As for Lucilla, she obeyed him, and betook herself to her own room, and swallowed her negus with a sense, not only of defeat, but of disappointment and mortification which was very unpleasant. To go back again and be an ordinary school-girl, after the pomp of woe in which she had come away, was naturally a painful thought; she who had ordered her mourning to be made long, and contemplated new furniture in the drawing-room, and expected to be mistress of her father's house, not to speak of the still dearer privilege of being a comfort to him; and now, after all, her active mind was to be condemned over again to verbs and chromatice scales, though she felt within herself capacities so much more extended. Miss Marjoribanks did not by any means learn by this defeat to take the characters of the other *personae* in her little drama into consideration, when she rehearsed her pet scenes hereafter—for that is a knowledge slowly acquired—but she was wise enough to know when resistance was futile; and like most people of lively imagination, she had a power of submitting to circumstances when it became impossible to change them. Thus she consented to postpone her reign, if not with a good grace, yet still without foolish resistance, and retired with the full honours of war. She had already re-arranged all the details, and settled upon all the means possible of preparing herself for what she called the charge of the establishment when her final emancipation took place, before she returned to school. "Papa thought me too young," she said, when she reached Mount Pleasant, "though it was dreadful to come away and leave him alone with only the servants; but, dear Miss Martha, you will let me learn all about political economy and things, to help me manage everything; for now that dear mamma is gone, there is nobody but me to be a comfort to papa."

And by this means Miss Marjoribanks managed to influence the excellent woman who believed in 'Friends in Council,' and to

direct the future tenor of her own education; while, at least, in that one moment of opportunity, she had achieved long dresses, which was a visible mark of womanhood, and a step which could not be retraced.

CHAPTER II.

Dr. Marjoribanks was so far from feeling the lack of his daughter's powers of consolation that he kept her at Mount Pleasant for three years longer, during which time it is supposed he managed to be comfortable after a benighted fashion—good enough for a man of fifty, who had come to an end of his illusions. To be sure, there were in the world, and even in Carlingsford, kind women, who would not have objected to take charge of the Doctor and his "establishment," and be a comfort to him; but, on the whole, it was undeniable that he managed tolerably well in external matters, and gave very good men's dinners, and kept everything in perfect order, so far as it went. Naturally the fairer part of existence was left out altogether in that grim, though well-ordered, house, but then he was only a man and a doctor, and knew no better; and while the feminine part of Grange Lane regarded him with natural pity, not only for what he lacked, but for a still more sad defect, his total want of perception on this subject, their husbands and fathers rather liked to dine with the Doctor, and brought home accounts of sauces which were enough to drive any woman to despair. Some of the ladies of Grange Lane—Mrs. Chiley, for example, who was fond of good living herself, and liked, as she said, "a little variety"—laid siege to the Doctor, and did their best to coax his receipts out of him; but Dr. Marjoribanks knew better than that. He gave all the credit to his cook, like a man of sense; and as that functionary was known in Carlingsford to be utterly regardless and unprincipled in respect to gravy beef, and the materials for "stock," or "consommé," as some people called it, society was disinclined to exert its ordinary arts to seduce so great an artist from the kitchen of her indulgent master. Then there were other ladies who took a different tone. "Dr. Marjoribanks, poor man, has nothing but his table to take up his mind," said Mrs. Centum, who had six children; "I never heard that the heart could be nourished upon sauces, for my part; and for a man who has his children's future to think of, I must say I am surprised at you, Mr. Centum." As for young Mrs. Woodburn, her

reply was still more decisive though milder in its tone. "Poor cook, I am so sorry for her," said the gentle young matron. "You know you always like something for breakfast, Charles; and then there is the children's dinner, and our lunch, and the servants' dinner, so that the poor thing is worn out before she comes to what you call the great event of the day; and you know how angry you were when I asked for a kitchen-maid for her, poor soul." The consequence of all this was, that Dr. Marjoribanks remained unrivalled in Grange Lane in this respect at least. When rumors arose in Carlingford of a possible second marriage for the Doctor—and such rumors naturally arose three or four times in the course of three years—the men of Grange Lane said, "Heaven forbid!" "No wife in the world could replace Nancy," said Colonel Chiley, after that fervent aspiration, "and none could put up with her;" while, on the other side, there were curious speculations afloat as to the effect upon the house, and especially upon the table, of the daughter's return. When a young woman comes to be eighteen it is difficult to keep her at school; and though the Doctor had stayed off the danger for the moment, by sending Lucilla off along with one of her school-fellows, whose family was going abroad, to make orthodox acquaintance with all the Swiss mountains, and all the Italian capitals, still that was plainly an expedient for the moment; and a new mistress to the house, which had got along so well without any mistress was inevitable. So that it cannot be denied Miss Marjoribanks's advent was regarded in Carlingford with as much interest and curiosity as she could have wished. For it was already known that the Doctor's daughter was not a mild young lady, easy to be controlled; but, on the contrary, had all the energy and determination to have her own way, which naturally belonged to a girl who possessed a considerable chin and a mouth which could shut, and tightly curling tawny tresses, which were still more determined than she was to be arranged only according to their inclination. It was even vaguely reported that some passage-of-arms had occurred between Miss Marjoribanks and the redoubtable Nancy during the short and uncertain opportunities which were afforded by holidays; and the community, accordingly, regarded as an affair of almost municipal importance Lucilla's final return home.

As for the young lady herself, though she was at school, she was conscious of having had a career not without importance, even

during these three years of pupilage. Since the day when she began to read political economy with Miss Martha Blount, who, though the second sister, was the directing spirit of the establishment, Lucilla had exercised a certain influence upon the school itself which was very satisfactory. Perhaps her course might be a little deficient in grace, but grace, after all, is but a secondary quality; and, at all events, Miss Marjoribanks went straight forward, leaving an unquestionable wake behind her, and running down with indifference the little skiffs in her way. She was possessed by nature of that kind of egotism or rather egoism, which is predestined to impress itself, by its perfect reality and good faith, upon the surrounding world. There are people who talk of themselves, and think of themselves as it were, under protest, and with depreciation, not actually able to convince themselves that anybody cares; but Lucilla, for her part, had the calmest and most profound conviction that, when she discussed her own doings and plans and clevernesses, she was bringing forward the subject most interesting to her audience as well as to herself. Such a conviction is never without its fruits. To be sure there were always one or two independent spirits who revolted; but for the crowd, it soon became impressed with a profound belief in the creed which Miss Marjoribanks supported so firmly. This conviction of the importance and value of her own proceedings made Lucilla, as she grew older, a copious and amusing conversationalist; a rank which few people who are indifferent to, or do not believe in, themselves can attain to. One thing she had made up her mind to as soon as she should return home, and that was to revolutionise society in Carlingford. On the whole, she was pleased with the success of the Doctor's dinner, though a little piqued to think that they owed nothing to herself; but Lucilla, whose instinct of government was of the true despotic order, and who had no objection to stoop, if by that means she could conquer, had no such designs against Nancy as were attributed to her by the expectant audience in Carlingford. On the contrary, she was quite as much disposed as her father was to take Nancy for prime-minister; for Miss Marjoribanks, though too much occupied with herself to divine the characteristic points of other people, had a sensible and thorough belief in those superficial general truths which most minds acquiesce in, without taking the trouble to believe. She knew, for example, that there was a great difference between the brilliant society of London, or of Paris, which appears in books, where wo-

men have generally the best of it, and can rule in their own right; and even the very best society of a country town, where husbands are very commonly unmanageable, and have a great deal more of their own way in respect to the houses they will or will not go to than is good for that inferior branch of the human family. Miss Marjoribanks had the good sense to see and appreciate these details; and she knew that a good dinner was a great attraction to a man, and that, in Carlingsford at least, when these refractory mortals were secured, the wives and daughters would necessarily follow. Besides, as is not uncommon with women who are clever women, and aware of the fact, Miss Marjoribanks preferred the society of men, and rather liked to say so. With all these intentions in her mind, it may be imagined that she received coolly enough the invitation of her friend to join in the grand tour, and the ready consent given by her father when he heard of it. But even the grand tour was a tool which Lucilla saw how to make use of. Nowadays, when people go everywhere, an untravelled woman would find it so much the harder to keep up the rôle of a leader of society to which she had devoted herself; and she felt to the depth of her heart the endless advantage to her future conversation of the experiences to be acquired in Switzerland and Italy. But she rejected with scorn the insinuation of other accidents that might occur on the way.

"You will never come back again, Lucilla," said one of her companions; "you will marry some enchanting Italian with a beautiful black beard, and a voice like an angel; and he'll sing serenades to you, and do all sorts of things: oh, how I wish I was you!"

"That may be," said Miss Marjoribanks, "but I shall never marry an Italian, my dear. I don't think I shall marry anybody for a long time. I want to amuse myself. I wonder, by the way, if it would improve my voice to take lessons in Italy. Did I ever tell you of the Italian nobleman that was so very attentive to me that Christmas I spent at Sissy Vernon's? He was very handsome. I suppose they really are all very handsome—except, of course, the Italian masters; but I did not pay any attention to him. My object, dear, and you know it, is to return home as well educated as possible, to be a comfort to dear papa."

"Yes, dear Lucilla," said the sympathetic girl, "and it is so good of you; but do tell me about the Italian nobleman—what did he look like—what did he say?"

"Oh, as for what he said, that is quite a different matter," said Lucilla; "but it is

not what they say, but the way they say it, that is the fun. I did not give him the least encouragement. As for that, I think, a girl can always stop a man when she does not care for him. It depends on whether you intend him to commit himself or not," Miss Marjoribanks continued, and fixed her eyes meditatively, but intently, upon her friend's face.

"Whether I intend?—oh goodness, Lucilla! how can you speak so? as if I ever intended anything," said her companion, confused, yet flattered, by the possibility; to which the elder sage answered calmly, with all the composure in the world.

"No, I never supposed you did; I was thinking of myself," said Lucilla, as if, indeed, that was the only reasonable subject of thought. "You know I have seen a good deal of the world, one way and another, with going to spend the holidays, and I could tell you quantities of things. It is quite astonishing how much experience one gets. When I was at Midhurst, at Easter, there was my cousin Tom, who was quite ridiculous; I declare he nearly brought things to an explanation, Fanny—which, of course, of all things in the world I most wanted to avoid."

"Oh, but why, Lucilla?" cried Fanny, full of delight and wonder; "I do so want to know what they say when they make—explanations, as you call them. Oh, do tell me, Lucilla, why?"

"My dear," said Miss Marjoribanks, "a cousin of my own! and only twenty one, and reading for the bar! In the first place, my aunt would never have forgiven me, and I am very fond of my aunt. It's so nice to like all one's relations. I know some girls, who can't bear theirs; and then a boy not much older than myself, with nothing but what his mother pleases! Fortunately he did not just say the words, so I escaped that time; but, of course, I could understand perfectly what he meant."

"But oh, Lucilla, tell me the words," cried the persistent questioner, "do, there's a darling! I am quite sure you have heard them—and I should so like to know exactly what they say;—do they go down on their knees?—or do they try to take your hand as they always do in novels?—or what do they do?—Oh, Lucilla, tell me, there's a dear!"

"Nonsense," said Lucilla, "I only want you to understand that I am not likely to fall into any danger of that sort. My only ambition, Fanny, as I have told you often, is to go home to Carlingsford and be a comfort to dear papa."

"Yes," said Fanny, kissing her devoted companion, "and it is so good of you, dear; but then you can not go on all your life being a comfort to dear papa," said the intelligent girl, bethinking herself, and looking again with some curiosity in Lucilla's face.

"We must leave that to Providence," said Miss Marjoribanks, with a sense of paying a compliment to Providence in intrusting it with such a responsibility. "I have always been guided for the best hitherto," she continued, with an innocent and unintentional profanity, which sounded solemn to her equally innocent companion, "and I don't doubt I shall be so till the end."

From which it will be perceived that Miss Marjoribanks was of the numerous class of religionists who keep up civilities with heaven, and pay all the proper attentions, and show their respect for the divine government in a manner besetting persons who know the value of their own approbation. The conversation dried at this point; or Lucilla was too important a person to be left to the undivided possession of an inquisitive innocent like Fanny Middleton, who was only sixteen, and had never had even a flirtation in her own person. There were no Carlingsford girls at Mount Pleasant, except poor little Rose Lake, the drawing-master's second daughter, who had been received on Dr. Marjoribanks's recommendation, and who heard the little children their geography and reading, and gave them little lessons in drawing, by way of paying for her own education; but then Rose was entirely out of Miss Marjoribanks's way, and could never count for anything in her designs for the future. The girls at Mount Pleasant were good girls on the whole, and were rather improved by the influence of Lucilla, who was extremely good-natured, and, so long as her superiority was duly acknowledged, was ready to do anything for any body—so that Rose Lake was not at all badly off in her inferior position. She could be made useful too, which was a great point in her favor; and Miss Marjoribanks, who possessed by nature some of the finest qualities of a ruler, instinctively understood and appreciated the instruments that came to her hand. As for Rose, she had been brought up at the school of design in Carlingsford, of which, under the supervision of the authorities who, in those days, inhabited Marlborough House, Mr. Lake was the master. Rose was the pride of the school in the peaceable days before her mother died; she did not know much else, poor child, except novels, but her copies "from the round" filled her father with

admiration, and her design for a Honiton-lace flounce, a spirited composition of dragons' tails and the striking plant called tea-zle, which flourishes in the neighborhood of Carlingsford (for Mr. Lake had leanings towards Preraphaelitism), was thought by the best judges to show a wonderful amount of feeling for art, and just missed being selected for the prize. A girl with such a talent was naturally much appreciated at Mount Pleasant. She made the most charming design for Miss Marjoribanks's handkerchief—"Lucilla," in Gothic characters, enclosed in a wreath of forget-me-nots, skilfully combined with thistle leaves, which Rose took great pains to explain were so much better adapted to ornamentation than foliage of a less distinct character; and the young draughtswoman was so charmed by Lucilla's enthusiastic admiration, that she volunteered to work the design in the cambric, which was a much more serious matter. This was on the eve of Miss Marjoribanks's final departure from school. She was to spend a year abroad, to the envy of all whom she left behind; but for herself, Lucilla was not elated. She thought it very probable that she would ascend Mont Blanc as far as the Grands Mulets at least, and, of course, in spring, go up Vesuvius, having got through the Carnival and Miserere and all the balls in Rome; but none of these things moved her out of her usual composure. She took it all in the way of business, as she had taken her French and her German and her singing and her political economy. As she stepped into the steamboat at Dover which was to convey her to scenes so new, Lucilla felt more and more that she who held the reorganisation of society of Carlingsford in her hands was a woman with a mission. She was going abroad as the heir-apparent went to America and the Holy Land, to complete her education, and fit herself, by an examination of the peculiarities of other nations, for an illustrious and glorious reign at home.

CHAPTER III.

It may be well to seize the opportunity of Miss Marjoribanks's travels, through which it is unnecessary to follow her, as they have nothing particular to do with the legitimate history of her great undertaking, to explain a little the state of affairs in Carlingsford before this distinguished revolutionary began her labours. It is something like going back into the prehistoric period—those ages of the flint, which only ingenious

quarrymen and learned geologists can elucidate — to recall the social condition of the town before Miss Marjoribanks began her Thursday evenings, before St. Roque's Chapel was built or thought of, while Mr. Bury, the Evangelical Rector, was still in full activity, and before old Mr. Tufton, at Salem Chapel (who sometimes drank tea at the Rectory, and thus had a kind of clandestine entrance into the dim outskirts of that chaos which was then called society), had his first "stroke." From this latter circumstance alone the entirely disorganised condition of affairs will be visible at a glance. It is true, Mr. Vincent, who succeeded Mr. Tufton, was received by Lady Western, in days when public opinion had made great advances; but then Lady Western was the most good-natured creature in the world, and gave an invitation, when it happened to come into her head, without the least regard for the consequences; and, after all, Mr. Vincent was very nice-looking and clever, and quite presentable. Fortunately, however, the period to which we allude was prior to the entrance of Lady Western into Grange Lane. She was a very pretty woman, and knew how to look like a lady of fashion, which is always of importance; but she was terribly inconsequent, as Miss Marjoribanks said, and her introductions were not in the least to be depended upon. She was indeed quite capable of inviting a family of retired drapers to meet the best people in Grange Lane, for no better reason than to gratify her *protégés*, which, of course, was a proceeding calculated to strike at the roots of all society. Fortunately for Carlingsford, its reorganisation was in abler hands. Affairs were in an utterly chaotic state at the period when this record commences. There was nothing which could be properly called a centre in the entire town. To be sure, Grange Lane was inhabited, as at present, by the best families in Carlingsford; but then, without organisation, what good does it do to have a number of people together? For example, Mr. Bury was utterly unqualified to take any lead. Mrs. Bury had been dead a long time, and the daughters were married, and the Rector's maiden sister, who lived with him, was entirely of his own way of thinking, and asked people to tea-parties, which were like Methodists' class-meetings, and where Mr. Tufton was to be met with, and sometimes other Dissenters, to whom the Rector gave what he called the right hand of fellowship. But he never gave anything else to society, except weak tea and thin bread-and-butter, which was fare, the ladies said, which the

gentlemen did not relish. "I never can induce Charles to go out to tea," said young Mrs. Woodburn, piteously; "he won't, and there is an end of it. After dinner he thinks of nothing but an easy-chair and the papers; and, my dear Miss Bury, what can I do?" "It is a great pity, my dear, that your husband's carelessness should deprive you of the benefit of Christian conversation; but, to be sure, it is your duty to stay with him, and I hope it will be made up to you at home," Miss Bury would say. As for the Rector, his favourites were devoted to him; and as he always saw enough of familiar faces at his sister's tea-parties, he took no account of the defaulters. Then there was Dr. Marjoribanks, who gave only dinners, to which naturally, as there was no lady in the house, ladies could not be invited, and who, besides, was rather a drawback than a benefit to society, since he made the men quite intolerable, and filled them with such expectations, in the way of cookery, that they never were properly content with a good family dinner after. Then the ladies, from whom something might justly have been expected in the way of making society pleasant — such as Mrs. Centum and Mrs. Woodburn, for example, who had everything they could desire, and the most liberal housekeeping allowances — were either incapacitated by circumstances (which was a polite term in use at Carlingsford, and meant babies) or by character. Mrs. Woodburn liked nothing so well as to sit by the fire and read novels, and "take off" her neighbours, when any one called on her; and, of course, the lady who was her audience on one occasion, left with the comfortable conviction that next time she would be the victim; a circumstance which, indeed, did not make the offender unpopular — for there were very few people in Carlingsford who could be amusing, even at the expense of their neighbours — but made it quite impossible that she should ever do anything in the way of knitting people together, and making a harmonious whole out of the scraps and fragments of society. As for Mrs. Chiley, she was old, and had not energy enough for such an undertaking; and, besides, she had no children, and disliked bustle and trouble, and was of opinion that the Colonel never enjoyed his dinner if he had more than four people to help him to eat it; and, in short, you might have gone over Grange Lane, house by house, finding a great deal of capital material, but without encountering a single individual capable of making anything out of it. Such was the lamentable condition, at the mo-

ment this history commences, of society in Carlingford.

And yet nobody could say that there were not very good elements to make society with. When you add to a man capable of giving excellent dinners, like Dr. Marjoribanks, another man like young Mr. Cavedish, Mrs. Woodburn's brother, who was a wit and a man of fashion, and belonged to one of the best clubs in town, and brought down gossip with the bloom on it to Grange Lane; and when you join to Mrs. Centum, who was always so good and so much out of temper that it was safe to calculate on something amusing from her, the languid but trenchant humour of Mrs. Woodburn — not to speak of their husbands, who were perfectly available for the background, and all the nephews and cousins and grandchildren, who constantly paid visits to old Mr. Western and Colonel Chiley; and the Browns, when they were at home, with their floating suite of admirers; and the young ladies who sang, and the young ladies who sketched, and the men who went out with the hounds, when business permitted them; and the people who came about the town when there was an election; and the barristers who made the circuit; and the gay people who came to the races; not to speak of the varying chances of curates, who could talk or play the piano, with which Mr. Bury favoured his parishioners — for he changed his curates very often; and the occasional visits of the lesser country people, and the country clergymen; — it will be plainly apparent that all that was wanting to Carlingford was a master-hand to blend these different elements. There had even been a few feeble preliminary attempts at this great work, which had failed, as such attempts always fail when they are premature, and when the real agent of the change is already on the way; but preparations and presentiments had taken vague possession of the mind of the town, as has always been observed to be the case before a great revolution, or when a man destined to put his mark on his generation, as the newspapers say, is about to appear. To be sure, it was not a man this time, but Miss Marjoribanks; but the atmosphere thrilled and trembled to the advent of the new luminary all the same.

Yet, at the same time, the world of Carlingford had not the least idea of the real quarter from which the sovereign intelligence which was to develop it from chaos into order and harmony was, effectivelly, to come. Some people had hoped in Mrs. Woodburn before she fell into her present languor of appearance and expression; and

a great many people hoped in Mr. Cavedish's wife, if he married, as he was said to intend to do; for this gentleman, who was in the habit of describing himself, no doubt, very truthfully, as one of the Cavendishes, was a person of great consideration in Grange Lane; and some hoped in a new Rector, for it was apparent that Mr. Bury could not last very long. Thus, with the ordinary short-sightedness of the human species, Carlingford blinded itself, and turned its eyes in every direction in the world rather than in that of the Swiss mountains, which were being climbed at that moment by a large and blooming young woman, with tawny short curls and alert decided movements; so little do we know what momentous issues may hang upon the most possible accident! Had that energetic traveller slipped but an inch further upon the *mer de glace* — had she taken that other step which she was with difficulty persuaded not to take on the Wengern Alp — there would have been an end of all the hopes of social importance for Carlingford. But the good fairies took care of Lucilla and her mission, and saved her from the precipice and the crevasses — and instinctively the air at home got note of what was coming, and whispered the news mysteriously through the keyholes. "Miss Marjoribanks is coming home," the unsuspecting male public said to itself as it returned from Dr. Marjoribanks's dinners, with a certain distressing, but mistaken presentiment, that these delights were to come to an end; and the ladies repeated the same piece of news, conjoining with it benevolent intimations of their intention to call upon her, and make the poor thing feel herself at home. "Perhaps she may be amusing," Mrs. Woodburn was good enough to add; but these words meant only that perhaps Lucilla, who was coming, to set them all right, was worthy of being placed in the satirist's collection along with Mrs. Centum and Mrs. Chiley. Thus, while the town ripened more and more for her great mission, and the ignorant human creatures, who were to be her subjects, showed their usual blindness and ignorance, the time drew nearer and nearer for Miss Marjoribanks's return.

CHAPTER IV.

"My daughter is coming home, Nancy," said Dr. Marjoribanks. "You will have to make preparations for her immediately. So far as I can make out from this letter, she will arrive to-morrow by the half-past five train."

"Well, sir," said Nancy, with the tone of a woman who makes the best of a misfortune, "it ain't every young lady as would have the sense to fix an hour like that. Ladies is terrible tiresome in that way; they'll come in the middle o' the day, when a body don't know in the world what to have for them; or they'll come at night, when a body's tired, and ain't got the heart to go into a supper. There was always a deal of sense in Miss Lucilla, when she hadn't got nothing in her head."

"Just so," said Dr Marjoribanks, who was rather relieved to have got through the announcement so easily. "You will see that her room is ready, and everything comfortable; and, of course, to-morrow she and I will dine alone."

"Yes, sir," said Nancy; but this assent was not given in the decisive tone of a woman whose audience was over; and then she was seized with a desire to arrange in a more satisfactory manner the cold beef on the sideboard. When she had secured this little interval for thought, she returned again to the table, where her master ate his breakfast, with a presentiment. "If you please, sir," said Nancy, "not to give you no vexation nor trouble, which every one knows as it has been the aim o' my life to spare you, as has so much on your mind. But it's best to settle afore commencing, and then we needn't have no heartburning. If you please, am I to take my orders of Miss Lucilla, or of you, as I've always been used to? In the missus's time," said Nancy, with modest confidence, "as was a good missus, and never gave no trouble as long as she had her soup and her jelly comfortable, it was always you as said what there was to be for dinner. I don't make no objection to doing up a nice little luncheon for Miss Lucilla, and giving a little more thought now and again to the sweets; but it ain't my part to tell you, sir, as a lady's taste, and more special a young lady's, ain't to be expected to be the same as yours and mine as has been cultivated like. I'm not one as likes contention," continued the domestic oracle, "but I couldn't abear to see a good master put upon; and if it should be as Miss Lucilla sets her mind upon messes as ain't got no taste in them, and milk-puddings and stuff, like the most of the ladies, I'd just like to know out of your own mouth, afore the commencement, what I'm to do?"

Dr. Marjoribanks was so moved by this appeal that he laid down his knife and contemplated the alarming future with some dismay. "It is to be hoped Miss Lucilla will know better," he said. "She has a great

deal of good sense, and it is to be hoped that she will be wise enough to consult the tastes of the house."

But the Doctor was not to be let off so easily. "As you say, sir, everything's to be hoped," said Nancy, steadily; "but there's a many ladies as don't seem to me to have got no taste to their mouths; and it ain't as if it was a thing that could be left to hopes. Supposin' as it comes to that, sir, what am I to do?"

"Well," said the Doctor, who was himself a little puzzled, "you know Miss Lucilla is nineteen, Nancy, and my only child, and the natural mistress of the house."

"Sir," said Nancy, austere, "them is things as it ain't needful to name; that ain't the question as I was asking. Supposin' as things come to such a point, what am I to do?"

"Bless me! it's half-past nine," said the Doctor, "and I have an appointment. You can come just as usual when we are at breakfast, that will be the best way," he said as he went out at the door, and chuckled a little to himself when he felt he had escaped. "Lucilla is her mother's daughter, it is true," he said to himself when he had got into the safe seclusion of his brougham, with a degree of doubt in his tone which was startling, to say the least of it, from the lips of a medical man; "but she is my child all the same," he added, briskly, with returning confidence; and in this conviction there was something which reassured the Doctor. He rubbed his hands as he bowled along to his appointment, and thought within himself that if she turned out a girl of spirit, as he expected, it would be good fun to see Lucilla's struggle with Nancy for the veritable reins of government. If Dr. Marjoribanks had entertained any positive apprehensions that his dinners would be spoiled in consequence, his amusement would have come to an abrupt conclusion; but he trusted entirely in Nancy and a little in Lucilla, and suffered his long upper-lip to relax at the thought without much fear.

Her father had not returned from the labours of his long day when Lucilla arrived, but he made his last visits on foot in order to be able to send the brougham for her, which was a great thing for the Doctor to do. There was, indeed, a mutual respect between the two, who were not necessary to each other's comfort, it is true, as such near relations sometimes are; but who, at the same time, except on the sole occasion of Mrs. Marjoribanks's death, had never misunderstood each other, as sometimes happens. This time Miss Marjoribanks was rather

pleased, on the whole, that the Doctor did not come to meet her. At other times she had been a visitor; now she had come into her kingdom, and had no desire to be received like a guest. A sense of coming home, warmer than she remembered to have felt before, came into Lucilla's active mind as she stepped into the brougham. Not that the words bore any special tender meaning, notwithstanding that it was the desire of her heart, well known to all her friends, to live henceforward as a comfort to dear papa, but that now at last she was coming into her kingdom, and entering the domain in which she intended her will to be law. After living for a year with friends whose arrangements (much inferior to those which she could have made had she had the power) she had to acquiesce in, and whose domestic economy could only be criticised up to a certain point, it was naturally a pleasure to Miss Marjoribanks to feel that now at length she was emancipated, and at liberty to exercise her faculty. There were times during the past year when Lucilla had with difficulty restrained herself from snatching the reins out of the hands of her hosts, and showing them how to manage. But, impatient as she was, she had to restrain herself, and make the best of it. Now all that bondage was over. She felt like a young king entering in secret a capital which awaits him with acclamations. Before she presented herself to the rejoicing public, there were arrangements to be made and things to be done; and Miss Marjoribanks gave a rapid glance at the shops in George Street as she drove past, and decided which of them she meant to honour with her patronage. When she entered the garden it was with the same rapid glance of reorganising genius that she cast her eyes around it; and still more decided was the look with which she regarded her own room, where she was guided by the new housemaid, who did not know Miss Lucilla. Nancy, who knew no better (being, like most gifted persons, a woman of one idea), had established her young mistress in the little chamber which had been Lucilla's when she was a child; but Miss Marjoribanks, who had no sentimental notions about white dimity, shook her head at the frigid little apartment, where, however, she was not at all sorry to be placed at present: for if Dr. Marjoribanks had been a man of the *prevenant* class, disposed to make all the preparations possible for his daughter, and arrange elegant surprises for her, he would have thoroughly disgusted Lucilla, who was bent on making all the necessary improvements in

her own person. When she went down to the drawing-room to await her father, Miss Marjoribanks's look of disapprobation was mingled with so much satisfaction and content in herself that it was pleasant to behold. She shook her head and shrugged her shoulders as she paused in the centre of the large faded room, where there was no light but that of the fire, which burned brightly, and kept up a lively play of glimmer and shadow in the tall glass over the fireplace, and even twinkled dimly in the three long windows, where the curtains hung stiff and solemn in their daylight form. It was not an uncomfortable sort of big, dull faded, respectable drawing-room; and if there had been a family in it, with recollections attached to every old ottoman and easy-chair, no doubt it would have been charming; but it was only a waste and howling wilderness to Lucilla. When she had walked from one end to the other, and verified all the plans she had already long ago conceived for the embellishment of this inner court and centre of her kingdom, Lucilla walked with her hesitating step to the fire, and took a match and lighted all the candles in the large old-fashioned candlesticks, which had been flickering in grotesque shadows all over the roof. This proceeding threw a flood of light on the subject of her considerations, and gave Miss Marjoribanks an idea, in passing, about the best mode of lighting, which she afterwards acted upon with great success. She was standing in this flood of light, regarding everything around her with the eye of an enlightened critic and reformer, when Dr. Marjoribanks came in. Perhaps there arose in the soul of the Doctor a momentary thought that the startling amount of *éclairage* which he witnessed was scarcely necessary, for it is certain that he gave a momentary glance at the candles as he went up to greet his daughter; but he was far too well-bred a man to suggest such an idea at the moment. On the contrary, he kissed her with a sentiment of real pleasure, and owned to himself that, if she was not a fool, and could keep to her own department, it might be rather agreeable on the whole to have a woman in the house. The sentiment was not enthusiastic, and neither were the words of his salutation—“Well Lucilla; so this is you!” said the moderate and unexcited father. “Yes, papa, it is me,” said Miss Marjoribanks, “and very glad to get home;” and so the two sat down and discussed the journey—whether she had been cold, and what state the railway was in—till the Doctor bethought himself that he had to prepare for dinner. “Nancy

is always very punctual, and I am sure you are hungry," he said; "so I'll go upstairs, with your permission, Lucilla, and change my coat;" and with this the actual arrival terminated, and the new reign began.

But it was only next morning that the young sovereign gave any intimation of her future policy. She had naturally a great deal to tell that first night; and though it was exclusively herself, and her own adventures and achievements, which Miss Marjoribanks related, the occasion of her return made that sufficiently natural; and the Doctor was not altogether superior to the natural prejudice which makes a man interested, even when they are not in themselves particularly interesting, in the doings of his children. She succeeded in doing what is certainly one of the first duties of a woman—she amused her father. He followed her to the drawing-room for a marvel, and took a cup of tea, though it was against his principles; and, on the whole, Lucilla had the satisfaction of feeling that she had made a conquest of the Doctor, which, of course, was the grand and most essential preliminary. In the little interval which he spent over his claret, Miss Marjoribanks had succeeded in effecting another fundamental duty of woman—she had, as she herself expressed it, harmonised the rooms, by the simple method of re-arranging half the chairs, and covering the tables with trifles of her own—a proceeding which converted the apartment from an abstract English drawing-room of the old school into Miss Marjoribanks's drawing-room, an individual spot of ground revealing something of the character of its mistress. The Doctor himself was so moved by this, that he looked vaguely round when he came in, as if a little doubtful where he was—but that might only be the effect of the sparkling mass of candles on the mantelpiece, which he was too well-bred to remark upon the first night. But it was only in the morning that Lucilla unfolded her standard. She was down to breakfast, ready to pour out the coffee, before the Doctor had left his room. He found her, to his intense amazement, seated at the foot of the table, in the place which he usually occupied himself, before the urn and the coffee-pot. Dr. Marjoribanks hesitated for one momentous instant, stricken dumb by this unparalleled audacity; but so great was the effect of his daughter's courage and steadiness, that after that moment of fate he accepted the seat by the side where every thing was arranged for him, and to which Lucilla invited him sweetly,

though not without a touch of mental perturbation. The moment he had seated himself, the Doctor's eyes were opened to the importance of the step he had taken. "I am afraid I have taken your seat, papa," said Miss Marjoribanks, with ingenuous sweetness. "But then I should have had to move the urn, and all the things, and I thought you would not mind." The Doctor said nothing but "Humph!" and even that in an undertone; but he became aware all the same that he had abdicated, without knowing it, and that the reins of state had been smilingly withdrawn from his unconscious hands.

When Nancy made her appearance the fact became still more apparent, though still in the sweetest way. "It is so dreadful to think papa should have been bothered with all these things so long," said Miss Marjoribanks. "After this I am sure you and I, Nancy, can arrange it all without giving him the trouble. Perhaps this morning, papa, as I am a stranger, you will say if there is anything you would like, and then I shall have time to talk it all over with Nancy, and find out what is best," and Lucilla smiled so sweetly upon her two amazed subjects that the humour of the situation caught the fancy of the Doctor, who had a keen perception of the ridiculous.

He laughed out, much to Nancy's consternation, who was standing by in open-eyed dismay. "Very well, Lucilla," he said; "you shall try what you can do. I daresay Nancy will be glad to have me back again before long; but in the meantime I am quite content that you should try," and he went off laughing to his brougham, but came back again before Lucilla could take Nancy in hand, who was an antagonist more formidable. "I forgot to tell you," said the Doctor, "that Tom Marjoribanks is coming on Circuit, and that I have asked him to stay here, as a matter of course. I suppose he'll arrive tomorrow. Good-bye till the evening."

This, though Dr. Marjoribanks did not in the least intend it, struck Lucilla like a Parthian arrow, and brought her down for the moment. "Tom Marjoribanks!" she ejaculated in a kind of horror. "Of all people in the world, and at this moment!" but when she saw the open eyes and rising colour of Nancy the young dictator recovered herself—for a conqueror in the first moment of his victory has need to be wary. She called Nancy to her in her most affectionate tones as she finished her breakfast. "I sent papa away," said Miss

Marjoribanks, "because I wanted to have a good talk with you, Nancy. I want to tell you my object in life. It is to be a comfort to papa. Ever since poor mamma died that is what I have been thinking of; and now I have come home, and I have made up my mind that he is not to be troubled about anything. I know what a good, faithful, valuable woman you are, I assure you. You need not think me a foolish girl who is not able to appreciate you. The dinner was charming last night, Nancy," said Lucilla, with much feeling; "and I never saw anything more beautifully cooked than papa's cutlets to-day."

"Miss Lucilla, I may say as I am very glad I have pleased you," said Nancy, who was not quite conquered as yet. She stood very stiffly upright by the table, and maintained her integrity. "Master is particular, I don't deny," continued the prime minister, who felt herself dethroned. "I've always done my best to go in with his little fancies, and I don't mean to say as it isn't right and natural as you should be the missis. But I ain't used to have ado with ladies, and that's the truth. Ladies is stingy in a-many things as is the soul of a good dinner to them as knows. I may be valleyable or not, it ain't for me to say; but I'm not one as can always be kept to a set figger in my gravy-beef, and my bacon, and them sorts of things. As for the butter, I don't know as I could give nobody an idea? I ain't one as likes changes, but I can't abide to be kept to a set figger; and that's the chief thing, Miss Lucilla, as I've got to say."

"And quite reasonable too," said Miss Marjoribanks; "you and I will work perfectly well together, Nancy. I am sure we have both the same meaning; and I hope you don't think I am less concerned about dear papa than about the gravy-beef. He must have been very desolate, with no one to talk to, though he has been so good and kind and self-sacrificing in leaving me to get every advantage; but I mean to make it up to him, now I've come home."

"Yes, miss," said Nancy, somewhat mystified; "not but what master has had his little parties now and again, to cheer him up a bit; and I make bold to say, miss, as I have heard compliments, which it was Thomas that brought 'em down-stairs, as might go nigh to turn a body's head, if it was vanity as I was thinking of; but I ain't one as thinks of anything but the comfort of the family," said Nancy, yielding in spite of herself to follow the leadings of the higher will in presence of which she found herself, "and I'm

always one as does my best, Miss Lucilla, if I ain't worried nor kept to a set figger with my gravy-beef."

"I have heard of papa's dinners," said Lucilla, graciously, "and I don't mean to let down your reputation, Nancy. Now we are two women to manage everything, we ought to do still better. I have two or three things in my head that I will tell you after; but in the mean time I want you to know that the object of my life is to be a comfort to poor papa; and now let us think what we had better have for dinner," said the new sovereign. Nancy was so totally unprepared for this manner of dethronement, that she gave in like her master. She followed Miss Marjoribanks humbly into those details in which Lucilla speedily proved herself a woman of original mind, and powers quite equal to her undertaking. The Doctor's formidable housekeeper conducted her young mistress down-stairs afterwards, and showed her everything with the meekness of a saint. Lucilla had won a second victory still more exhilarating and satisfactory than the first; for, to be sure, it is no great credit to a woman of nineteen to make a man of any age throw down his arms; but to conquer a woman is a different matter, and Lucilla was thoroughly sensible of the difference. Now, indeed, she could feel with a sense of reality that her foundations were laid.

Miss Marjoribanks had enough of occupation for that day, and for many days. But her mind was a little distracted by her father's parting intelligence, and she had, besides, a natural desire to view the country she had come to conquer. When she had made a careful supervision of the house, and shifted her own quarters into the pleasantest of the two best bedrooms, and concluded that the little bare dimity chamber she had occupied the previous night was quite good enough for Tom Marjoribanks, Lucilla put on her hat and went out to make a little *reconnaissance*. She walked down to the spot where St. Roque's now stands, on her own side of Grange Lane, and up on the other side into George Street, surveying all the capabilities of the place with a rapid but penetrating glance. Dr. Marjoribanks's house could not have been better placed as a strategic position, commanding as it did all Grange Lane, of which it was, so to speak, the key, and yet affording a base of communication with the profaner public which Miss Marjoribanks was wise enough to know a leader of society should never ignore completely; for, indeed, one of the great advantages of that brilliant position is, that it gives a woman a right to be arbitrary, and to select her materials ac-

cording to her judgment. It was more from a disinclination to repeat herself than any other motive that Lucilla, when she had concluded this preliminary survey, went up into Grove Street, meaning to return home that way. At that hour in the morning the sun was shining on the little gardens on the north side of the street, which was the plebeian side; and as it was the end of October, and by no means warm, Lucilla was glad to cross over and continue her walk by the side of those little enclosures where the straggling chrysanthemums propped each other up, and the cheerful Michaelmas daisies made the best of it in the sunshine that remained to them. Miss Marjoribanks had nearly reached Salem Chapel, which pushed itself forward amid the cosy little line of houses, pondering in her mind the unexpected hindrance which was about to be placed in her triumphant path, in the shape of Tom Marjoribanks, when that singular piece of good fortune occurred to her which had so much effect upon her career in Carlingsford. Such happy accidents rarely happen, except to great generals or heroes of romance; and it would have been, perpaps, a presumption on the part of Lucilla to place herself conspicuously in either of these categories. The fact is, however, that at this eventful moment she was walking along under the shade of her pretty parasol, not expecting anything, but absorbed in many thoughts, and a little cast down in her expectations of success by a consciousness that this unlucky cousin would insist upon making love to her, and perhaps, even as she herself expressed it, *saying the words* which it had taken all her skill to prevent him from saying before. Not that we would have any one believe that love-making in the abstract was disagreeable to Miss Marjoribanks; but she was only nineteen, well off and good-looking, and with plenty of time for all that; and at the present moment she had other matters of more importance in hand. It was while occupied with these reflections, and within three doors of

Salem Chapel, in front of a little garden where a great deal of mignonette had run to seed, and where the Michaelmas daisies had taken full possession, that Lucilla was roused suddenly out of her musings. The surprise was so great that she stopped short and stood still before the house in the extremity of her astonishment and delight. Who could it be that possessed that voice which Miss Marjoribanks felt by instinct was the very one thing wanting—a round, full, delicious *contralto*, precisely adapted to supplement without supplanting her own high-pitched and much-cultivated organ? She stopped short before the door and made a rapid observation even in the first moment of her surprise. The house was not exactly like the other humble houses in Grove Street. Two little blank squares hung in the centre of each of the lower windows, revealed to Lucilla's educated eye the existence of so much "feeling" for art as can be satisfied with a transparent porcelain version of a famous Madonna; and she could even catch a glimpse, through the curtains of the best room—which, contrary to the wont of humble gentility in Carlingsford, were well drawn back, and allowed the light to enter fully—of the glimmer of gilt picture-frames. And in the little garden in front, half-buried among the mignonette, were some remains of plaster-casts, originally placed there for ornament, but long since cast down by rain and neglect. Lucilla made her observations with the promptitude of an accomplished warrior, and, before the second bar of the melody indoors was finished, had knocked very energetically. "Is Miss Lake at home?" she asked, with confidence, of the little maid-servant who opened the door to her. And it was thus that Lucilla made her first bold step out of the limits of Grange Lane for the good of society, and secured at once several important personal advantages, and the great charm of those Thursday evenings which made so entire a revolution in the taste and ideas of Carlingsford.

MR. CLINTON'S OFFER.

BY ELLA RODMAN.

I WAS wrought up to a desperate deed. In token whereof I had equipped myself in full armor—curls, waterfall, rats, white waist, etc., determined that the sacrifice I meditated should be accomplished in a becoming manner.

It gives one a comfortable sort of feeling, after all, this sense of self-immolation; and as I flitted down the stairs parlorward, the rustling of my stiff white skirts was an agreeable sound. My looking-glass and I were usually on very good terms; but that evening, I felt particularly pleased with what I had seen over my left shoulder just before I left the room.

Yes, I would put an end to it, this wretched wandering about ever since I could remember; mamma should have a home, which she was so well calculated to adorn—and I would have a husband. To be sure, I did not want one, especially the one in prospect; but what matter, when there was so 'much to be considered, if I did not have a lover?

So I entered the parlor fully prepared to accept Mr. Clinton's offer.

Mamma was very pretty and very gentle; she had been left a widow many years ago, and my ideas of a father were rather vague and confused. We had a small property that enabled us to live respectably, in places where living was comparatively inexpensive; but we frequently changed our residence, and while I was absent on a visit to a school-mate, mamma wrote to me that she had taken the pretty cottage to which I was getting really attached. I came home to find a little earthly Paradise, in the midst of a beautiful country, where boating, fishing, driving, and every practicable rural amusement, drew every summer a crowd of pleasure-seekers, who gave quite a fashionable tone to the society. I was in my element, and enjoyed that summer in every hour and minute of it.

I think a certain Frank Gliddon, who is inseparably connected with moonlight rows on the lake, and bits of poetry, and pressed flowers, had much to do with this. His sisters were "such nice girls," and they and their mother had called upon us at once, and shown us every attention.

But mamma and I were quite the belles of the Vol. XLVII.—18

neighborhood, in a different way, of course; for every one said that mamma was so dignified, and so much of a lady, and so handsome and young-looking to have a grown-up daughter: but she was not at all gay, and people saw at once that they must keep their distance with her. I was rather a harum-scarum concern, always ready for a frolic; and that was why I wondered that Mr. Clinton, with his learning, and grand, haughty air, should have fancied me—except that people usually like their opposites.

Mr. Clinton's handsome house—just the kind I had always hankered after—brown-stone, with a grand entrance, and beautiful bay-windows, to which delicate vines clung in graceful sprays, and which looked out on exquisitely kept graveled walks, and thickets of rare shrubbery, velvet lawn, and glowing masses of bloom—with a carriage-house in the distance, pretty enough for a small, picturesque family to live in; and such horses! the very sight of those superb bays was enough to drive one wild with envy—this beautiful home had been without a mistress for years.

But people were very kind; and there was scarcely an unappropriated female, for miles around, who had not pitied Mr. Clinton's loneliness so much, that she had done everything but make him a regular offer. It was the fashion to go and see him, just as if he had been a lady; a fashion, however, that mamma and I did not follow, because we were ladies.

People often have a perverse fashion of going where they are not sought; and when I returned from my visit, I found Mr. Clinton established as a regular visitor at the cottage, on such a pleasant, friendly sort of footing, that it was impossible to treat him like a stranger.

When mamma said, "This is my daughter, Mr. Clinton, of whom you have so often heard me speak," the gentleman looked as if mamma, in my absence, had turned match-maker, and lauded me up until Mr. Clinton had looked for an absolute piece of perfection.

I determined to undeceive him as soon as possible; and, with this view, I rattled on in my wildest manner, hazarded two or three startling remarks, and conducted myself generally in a

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way that richly deserved a severe maternal reprimand. But dear mamma was not given to anything of the kind; and I heard her say, on a subsequent occasion, to Mr. Clinton,

"Dear Laura is a little wild—but she really is a most good and loveable child."

"I think I understand Miss Laura thoroughly," said the deep-toned voice in reply. "She is a little spoiled with admiration and flattery, as is quite natural—but very charming, nevertheless. It would be a pleasant task to train such a mind as hers."

"Indeed!" I could not help exclaiming. Things were progressing rapidly, and the two conspirators seemed to have matters all arranged. It was not agreeable this being disposed of *nolens volens*—I did not choose to be "trained"—and every separate hair on my willful head rose up in rebellion.

Perhaps this was why I lent a willing ear to Frank Gliddon's ridiculous speeches, and played the part of passenger in his pretty little yacht, while mamma and Mr. Clinton talked demurely on shore. He certainly behaved very well, (Mr. Clinton, I mean,) and displayed no feeling of pique at being pushed aside for a younger admirer. He came and talked to me, whenever Frank Gliddon was out of the way, sensibly and composedly, as if he felt that he was ever so much older than I; recommended me books to read; criticised my drawing and piano-playing; and even presumed to lecture me for exposing unprotected shoulders to the night air.

I supposed this was part of the "training," and I felt indescribably amused. When matters reached the proper pitch, Mr. Clinton would probably say, in that faultlessly gentlemanly way of his, "You have been a very good girl, Laura, very proper and obedient; and I shall now reward you by making you my wife, when I can continue your education indefinitely."

There was something very winning, though, in Mr. Clinton's deferential attentions to mamma. I could not but think he displayed considerable "strategy" in this. "Get on the mother's side," is an old adage. But I often laughed to myself, as I thought that the two plotters little knew what I knew.

Frank Gliddon was becoming troublesome, for I could scarcely make up my mind whether I loved him or not, and I rather dreaded being alone with him. His sisters, too, became desperately affectionate; and I was afraid that matters were really getting to be serious.

At this juncture, mamma received a letter communicating the loss of our little all; and it

became evident that decided measures must speedily be taken. Our home would again be broken up; "The Vines," the scene of many pleasant hours, pass into other hands; and I sat and pondered over ways and means, until a gigantic scheme of self-sacrifice presented itself.

"For myself," said dear mamma, with her usual unselfishness, "I do not care; but I feel sorry, dear child, that, at some future day, you will have to go penniless to the man you love."

I knew she was thinking of Mr. Clinton; and I resolved, more determinedly than at first, to sacrifice myself. I became more attentive, and less flighty in my manner toward Mr. Clinton; and he was evidently gratified at the change.

Mr. Clinton was not a bit lover-like, however. He lectured and advised me rather more than ever; and evidently regarded me from such an immense height, that I wondered how in the world I should ever get on with him, after I had married him, and what he expected me to call him. I could almost fancy him saying, "Madam, my first wife was a Percy, and she would not have dared to take such a liberty!"

I sighed considerably over Frank Gliddon; for I had discovered that, if I did not "feel it to be my duty" to marry Mr. Clinton, I should certainly love him. But dear mamma liked all beautiful and luxurious things, and I could place her in just such a home as she was fitted for. Frank had never told me that he loved me, except with his eyes; and he was only a young lawyer, who could not give mamma the luxury I coveted for her.

So, I adjusted my dress, on that eventful evening, with the calmness that resolution invariably gives; for Mr. Clinton had whispered to me, in the afternoon, that he had something to say to me alone—would I see him? I had given him my promise; and although I knew that Frank Gliddon sat alone and dismal in his bark—the Fairy Queen—my mind was made up, and I descended to my fate.

I encountered mamma on the stairs, who hesitated when she saw me; perhaps she trembled for my happiness, for she must have read a stern resolve in my eye; and whispered timidly, as she pressed my hand,

"Try not to hurt Mr. Clinton's feelings, darling, even if you are surprised at his communication. Do not let him see anything that will annoy him, for he is very sensitive; and remember, Laura, that I have endeavored to consult your true interests."

"I know you have, dear mamma," I replied, with a kiss; "but never fear that you will have

any trouble from *me*—my only desire is to see you happy."

"Mamma's face was fairly illuminated as she passed me; and with the consciousness that I had a great deal in my power, I entered the parlor where Mr. Clinton was waiting for me.

Of course, I did not expect him to go down on his knees, as that would not have been at all in character; but I was not quite prepared for the benevolent, fatherly style of address with which Mr. Clinton greeted me.

"My dear child," said he, taking my hand with a very composed sort of affection, "I suppose that your mother has prepared you—"

"Mamma has told me nothing!" I exclaimed, pettishly, for I felt provoked that he should want to get rid of the trouble of making me an offer. "I am here simply in answer to your request of this afternoon."

Not a bit of help should he get from me, and I quite enjoyed his surprise.

"At least," he continued, after a somewhat awkward pause, "you imagine the purport of my communication? for utter ignorance on the subject must be feigned."

My cheeks were blazing—never had I encountered so ridiculous, so humiliating an adventure. He evidently expected me to answer his question before he had asked it; but I would stand this no longer, and, rising hastily, I exclaimed,

"I do not understand enigmas, Mr. Clinton; you will excuse me if I leave you until you have something definite to say."

"Something definite to say?" he repeated, with a smile. "What I have to say is 'definite' enough; but I feel a natural embarrassment at asking a beautiful, well-grown girl of nineteen to receive me as her father. But as your mother has consented to take me as her husband, I hope you will not be very obdurate. Shall we seal the compact, Laura?"

And before I could realize this sudden change of base, Mr. Clinton had folded me warmly in his arms, and bestowed a fatherly kiss upon me!

Dear, cowardly mamma! She could not face her grown-up daughter with this confession, and had wisely left Mr. Clinton to break it.

"Oh, I am so glad!" I exclaimed, in a rap-

ture. "I will love you dearly, and I am very, very glad for mamma—she needs some one to take care of her."

"I think," replied my papa elect, "that a young gentleman who shall be nameless has the same opinion respecting *you*."

I ran to my room, and threw myself down on the bed literally shaking with laughter. Was ever anything so ridiculous perpetrated before? I had worked myself all up to sacrifice pitch, and, lo and behold! I was "not the person wanted!" I must confess to feeling a little humiliated—but, one comfort, no one knew it; and I resolved to keep my own counsel to the best of my ability.

"I am so glad," said mamma, brightly, when we talked matters over, "that you received it as you did, Laura. Mr. Clinton was very much pleased, and I had almost feared that you did not like him. He was amused, though, at your perfect unconsciousness," she continued, laughing; "and I really wonder that you did not suspect when you saw him here so often."

How could I confess that, in my vanity, I had appropriated these visits to myself? I bent down lower over my work, to hide a smile at my own blindness, and mamma went on:

"Your governess scheme, of which you have sometimes talked since our misfortunes, will have to be given up, Laura, for I am quite sure that Mr. Clinton would never allow it. He has been very generous, very noble; but I could not bear to speak to you of him—grown-up daughters do not always look favorably upon a mother's forming new ties—"

I stopped her mouth with a kiss, and felt so happy to think that I had not got to marry Mr. Clinton, myself, that I almost danced upon air.

The next evening, Frank Gliddon cornered me somewhere among the vines, and told me a backneyed old story that was first whispered to Eve in Paradise, but which has the peculiarity of appearing new every time it is told; and I was silly enough to be very much interested in it. As Mr. Clinton did not want to marry me—having had the good taste to prefer my more attractive mamma, I was obliged to take up with Frank.

In life—condolences, very likely, from Royalty itself—subscriptions, addressees, a memorial fund, and perhaps even a monument.

If the feelings, doing such honour to our common nature in the case supposed, should take that very permanent form of expression I have last mentioned—a Monument, erected in memory of my unparalleled sufferings, it would undoubtedly be that of a Stone Omnibus—for it was when travelling in an omnibus that this torture was endured—a granite 'bus, as it seemed to poor, friendless me, at the time, with driver of black marble (but of him I only saw the boots through the inside window), and with a conductor of impenetrable adamant.

I do not belong to a rank of society, please to understand, which is in the habit of using public conveyances, and far less 'busses, at all. When I wish to take the air or go a shopping, I "touch a bell," like Mr. Secretary Stanton (Seward), and observe: "The Brougham at 8 or 4," as the case may be, and it comes to the door accordingly; but my husband having been less pressed by professional business of late than usual, and the last few mornings being fine, he observed: "Let us have no Brougham but Vaux;" and although I did not quite understand his meaning, I was very well content to accompany him on foot, for it is not always one can get a husband to go shopping.

He had been in my company to sit for a crystal cube portrait, to give me on our marriage-day; and all seemed sunshine, as it sometimes does when the greatest misfortunes are awaiting. No sooner had we left the establishment in question at Charing Cross, than it began to rain—one of those sudden and violent downfalls, which really seem to be the result of some accident in the main of nature's water-works—as though the grandmother of all buckets, as the Persians say, was emptying; and our cry was "Cab, cab, cab!" and still they did not come. No two expressions in the human face divine are perhaps more different than the look of a cabman who wants a fare, and the look of a cabman when he doesn't. In the one case, he is sprightly, intelligent, obliging, eager; in the other, he is morose, phlegmatic, repulsive, as though all the world was indeed the orange to which it is so often likened, and he had squeezed it flat, and there was nothing more to be got out of it. He takes no notice of cries, gestures, importunities of half-drowned persons, for it is his turn now to be deaf to the solicitations of his fellow-creatures, and blind to all the signals of the human semaphore. Nay, he enjoys the sufferings of the non-umbrella'd, for, as my husband quotes from Milton or somebody, "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" with the London cabman.

Although observing hitherto these unpleasant characteristics as an uninterested spectator only, and knowing nothing of their hideous attempts at overcharge, and dreadful language when withheld, except from hearsay, I have always hated cabmen and their cabs, but I could never have imagined that any vehicle, either upon two wheels or four, could have filled me with such unimaginable loathing as that with which I now regard a 'Bus. I have said that we could get no cab, and the wet was pouring through my delicate parasol as through a sieve, when my husband suddenly exclaimed: "Come, here's a roof, at all events," and hailed a Notting Hill omnibus.

"Never!" exclaimed I.

"Come along," cried he; "don't be ridiculous;" and while still feebly resisting, I found myself on the step of this—this mammoth machine. On the step, but by no means inside. The machine, indeed, was large, but it was not large enough. I read afterwards, upon a scroll above the door, the startling fact, that it was licensed to carry twelve inside; and I am sure they must have been all there besides the passengers. Four females were already within; and above the sea of crinoline, the hats and heads of six gentlemen were visible. My husband and myself, I was given to understand, would make up the party. I will not wound the sensibilities of my readers by describing my emotions during my passage from one end of that vehicle to the other. I will only say that—doubtless from experience of what it was best and kindest to do—every passenger gave my dress a pull as I squeezed by him; and that, when I reached the further corner, and sat down (if we may call it sitting), I registered a mental vow that I would not get out again until everybody else had done so. My husband followed, as the lawyers say, "on the same side;" and if he had a square inch of sitting room, it was as much as he had, and a good deal of that was sharp steel.

"My dear," said I, perceiving the expression of his countenance, "it's no use muttering those dreadful words; I can't help it. I can't make my crinoline smaller."

"Well, then, I can't stand it," replied he. "I shall get out, and go to the club. I'll tell the cab to put you down at Westbourne Terrace."

"Oh, my goodness!" cried I, "you are not going to leave me in this dreadful place alone."

"The 'bus passes almost your very door," says he; "you cannot meet with anything unpleasant; it isn't as though there was nobody in the 'bus to protect you. [It certainly was not.] Have you got some money with you?"

"Yes," returned I, with a sort of calm despair; "I have got my purse; for I feel its silver clasp running into me, and hurting me very much."

"That is all right," said he, without thinking, I hope, of what he was saying; "but I'm [something which I didn't quite catch] if I stand this any longer."

The next moment, I was alone—that is to say, there were fellow creatures all around, but not a drop of sympathy which could be depended upon, among them all.

Hermit never was half so lone.

As he who hath fellows, but friend not one—

and this is especially true of a lady of quality in a crowded omnibus. For some little time, the novelty of my situation prevented my feeling how forlorn I was. The rattle of this species of vehicle is not to be described by mere word; and is of a character to confuse the intelligence of the most collected. I suppose the class of persons who use 'busses delight in this rough music, or they would surely insist upon it being stopped. Close beside me was what I took at first to be some anatomical curiosity in a glass case; but these were the legs of the driver, seen through a little window, as above mentioned; this spectacle also affords, I suppose, some pleasure, or it would surely be excluded from the view of the passengers. Ever since my husband's departure, the cab had never ceased to exclaim, in an excited and irritable manner, "Rillolok! Rillolok!" by which artful exclamation, as I subsequently made out, he was striving to lure some other person to occupy the superfluities I have already alluded to; but in this infamous purpose, I am happy to say, he did not succeed. Although unable to look out of window (except at the legs of the driver), by reason of intervening opaque bodies (the size, by the by, of all my fellow-passengers was stupendous, although

* The exclamation which our fair correspondent describes must we think, have been intended for Royal Oak, a public-house in Baywater, which is a great halting-place for omnibuses.

MRS. R.'S ADVENTURE.

As it is my intention to describe one of the most thrilling incidents which ever occurred in the existence of any lady moving in the upper circles of society, and as that lady is myself, the public must kindly content themselves with the above heading. They will be doubtless desirous to learn the name in full of the heroine of so tremendous a catastrophe—being a female myself, I can easily pardon so natural a curiosity—but I cannot furnish more than the initial letter. My nerves are not what they were previous to the overwhelming experience about to be narrated, and I feel that I am not equal to the further trial which publicity would entail upon me. I could not receive the thousand-and-one expressions of sympathy which would certainly flow in, after such a revelation, from all quarters—deputations from numbers of my own sex and position

continued travel in such conveyances would, I should have imagined, produced tenuity), I was yet enabled to calculate by the time consumed that I must be getting near my destination. One or two persons having left the vehicle, I began to think that I might be able to extricate myself without much difficulty. So I felt for my purse, and by exertions, which I may fairly designate as "superhuman," managed to get it out of my pocket. First I felt in the gold department, simply because one's fingers always do get there when one wants the silver one. One never carries gold, when one goes out with one's husband shopping, for obvious reasons, and therefore I was not surprised to find none. Then I felt in the silver department; and a shudder shook my frame, for there was nothing there. However, I always carry stamps, and the man would surely take twelve stamps instead of fourpence. Alas, that very morning I had given my sister all my stamps save one to put on a quantity of charity circulars she was posting; and that one she had laughingly refused to take upon the ground that it had no gum on it, and looked as if it had been used before. That doubtful stamp was all that I now found myself possessed of in the way of legal tender!

Hot and cold, pale and flushed, fever-dry and damp with the dews of terror—all these physical changes took me one after the other, while mentally my reason was shaken to its very centre. I had never been in the position of an unprotected female before. I scarcely knew what it was to be without a coachman and footman within call. As to being alone and penniless, I could scarcely picture to myself the actual horrors of such a situation. At this moment, over the shoulder of my opposite neighbour, I beheld a prison-van pass by, as though it had been sent me for a sign. A little later, while I was still devising scheme after scheme of escape, and dismissing one after the other as impracticable, a mob of people obstructed our progress, the figures in the foreground of which were a policeman and a lady elegantly dressed, the latter of whom had been taken up for shop lifting "Carve her right, ma'am," observed the only member of my own sex now left in the vehicle; and the uncompromising way in which she said it shattered in an instant the resolve I had formed of asking her—for the love of all she held sacred—to lend me a fourpenny-bit. I felt certain that she would see me borne away to prison or the bulks, or whatever dreadful destination my circumstances might earn for me, without a pang of pity. I fancied I remembered the very words of some penal statute specially directed against persons who obtained a ride in a public conveyance under *false pretences*—the last three words in particular were impressed upon my memory. How many days would elapse, I wondered, before I should be permitted to communicate with my husband?

As for asking a strange gentleman to lend me fourpence, I was sure that I could never do that. I felt, to begin with, that I should scarcely be able to make myself heard in the tumult, and that he would reiterate: "What, ma'am?" and make me repeat the dreadful request a dozen times.

And now we were getting awfully near the terrace for which I was bound. We passed through Westbourne Place, where there were many tradesmen's shops with which I dealt; and perhaps I could have persuaded the conductor to step with me into the grocer's or the hairdresser's, and so get paid; but I dared not let these people know that I ever travelled in an omnibus; it would get all over the neighbourhood; no—anything was better than such a disclosure as that. Past the gleaming shops we rattled, and into the familiar terrace, within a stonethrow of my happy home!

"The lady for Westbourne Terrace," cried the conductor, stopping the vehicle, and flinging open the door with a crash,

"Never mind," said I feebly—"never mind, my good man,

it's of no consequence; I'll go on a little further."

"Just as you please, ma'am," returned the conductor, looking at me rather queerly; "there's no extra charge to the

journey's end."

"Thank goodness for that," murmured I; "I cannot, then, be declared a defaulter to a greater extent than fourpence. The offence is not increased by my sitting here; and surely procrastination is better than the immediate verdict. By waiting until this horrid machine stops, I shall have an opportunity of private conference with this man, and my passionate appeal may move him." Not, however, that I had much hope of this; for he was a hard and shining man, upon whom the rain seemed to have no effect beyond making him shine the more; and tears would probably be even less regarded.

After I had observed that "it was of no consequence where I got out," the other passengers all fixed their eyes upon me furiously, and although evidently strangers to one another, exchanged meaning looks among themselves. I knew very well what they were thinking about. They concluded I was out of my mind; and when I thought of the dear children at home, flattening their noses against the drawing-room window, in hopeful expectation of their mamma's return, and of the loose money that was lying in my dressing case, any smallest coin of which would be worth forty times its weight in virgin gold, if it was only in my pocket instead of there, I felt that I was very nearly going mad in reality. However, these wretches all got out, one after another; and I heard the conductor scramble over the roof of the vehicle, doubtless to tell his friend the driver what a queer fare they had got inside, who was determined to have her money's worth by going as far as it would take her. For one moment, the idea of taking the opportunity of the door being left unguarded, crossed my mind; but remembering how very dangerous I had always heard it was to attempt to leave a carriage while in motion, I put aside that unworthy scheme with honest indignation. We were now going very fast, and thereby I learned by experience why it is they pack people into omnibuses like figs in a drum. If this were not done, the inmates would be tossed violently from side to side, as I was, like parched pease in a frying-pan. I also learned for the first time on this occasion how very far London extended westward, and what a number of—I dare say respectable—persons live on the wrong side of Westbourne Terrace. At last, amidst a neighbourhood which appeared to have been built the day before yesterday, the machine stopped in front of an unfinished public-house, round which all the disreputable persons who could be gathered together in so out-of-the-way a district, appear to be collected. The moment of confession had arrived, and I was not unprepared, by this time, to address the court—I mean the Conductor—in mitigation. I stood on the step, and laid my laced parasol upon his arm, in order to emphasize the statement that my husband had forgotten to leave with me the amount of my fare.

"The gentleman," said I, "who got out in Regent Street"—

"All right, mum," interrupted the man, touching his hat, I am bound to say, with civility and discernment. "He paid for you, 'cos he said it would save trouble."

I thought I should have fainted with joy. Save trouble! He had preserved my reputation, my liberty, my very life, perhaps! I never felt so truly glad that I was married, never so thoroughly appreciated the advantages of a husband. It was fortunate that this feeling overwhelmed all others, or I

do think, in the first burst of gratitude, I should have embraced that hard and shining man. Instead of that, however, I merely observed: "Can I get a cab? I want to go to Westbourne Terrace."

"Well, upon my life!" exclaimed he, slapping his leg. Then turning to the reddest of all the red-nosed 'throng' around us, he added: "Jem, bring your cab up; here's a fare."

While the cab was being brought up, I once more retired into the interior of the machine, and heard the conductor explaining to his friends the peculiar idiosyncrasy of the lady inside.

"Man and boy," said he, "I bin with 'busses thirty year but I never seed nothin' like this. Now, she's a-going back, and you may depend upon it she'll be here again" [he shuddered] "before the day's out. She's what they call a manymoniac. There's been nothing like her in a public conveyance, since Mr. Hunt"—

Here the vehicle arrived, and I made my escape; but I quite agree with what that conductor was about to observe. Nothing so terrible has occurred in a public conveyance since the criminal alluded to poisoned a whole cabful of people, as that adventure of mine in the Notting Hill 'Bus.

STORY OF JOSHUA WOOD.

The Youth's Companion (1827-1929); Mar 23, 1865; 38, 12; American Periodicals

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his influence I was preserved from instant death, and taken back to Little Rock. Here, Gen. Hindman, then in command, thrust me into a cell five and one-half feet high, (I am six feet two) five and one-half feet long and two and one-half feet wide, and totally dark. There was a hole in the floor, and a stream of water ran underneath. An aperture in the wall was opened twice a day large enough to shove in a piece of corn bread, and some water was poured in to me through a pipe passing through the wall. This was all the connection I had with the living world for three months. I lost in this time one hundred and eighteen pounds of flesh. My eye sight failed so I could not read for a long time after my release. I feel that I should have died there had not Jesus been with me and filled my soul with peace. I forgot to say that I had sought and found my Saviour, after entering the army, at Mulligan's Bend, La. The human instrumentality of this change was the memory of the teachings of my mother, so long ago gone to heaven. At last I was tried by a court martial, and sentenced to be hung. I was placed on the fatal drop, my hands pinioned—the cap drawn over my eyes, and the rope round my neck. It was the happiest moment of my life, for I expected to see my Saviour and my mother. But just at this moment Gen. Jo. Johnson arrived to supersede Gen. Hindman. He rode in front of the gallows, and my father with him on his staff. My father recognized me, and said to Johnson,

"That is Joshua," and without speaking a word in my behalf, rode to the rear.

Johnson answered, "I guess not," but ordered the cap lifted, and seeing his old favorite, stayed the execution, and remanded me to prison; not, however, to my old cell. He probably would have given me the liberty of the camp, on parole, had it not been for the clamor of his followers. I was, for many reasons, a special object for their hate. Many had come long distances to glut their malice by seeing me hung. They raged like wolves disappointed of their prey. Partly, I suppose, to gratify them by my confinement, and partly to protect me from their violence, I was put into a cage eight feet square in the jail, and the doors opened, and the multitude allowed to pass through and see me thus confined, and load me with their curses and insults. Here I was kept two months. Then I was liberated, on my word of honor as a soldier that I would not try to escape.

Some time after Gen. Johnson privately released him from his parole, and assisted him to escape to the Union lines.

STORY OF JOSHUA WOOD.

Joshua W. Wood was the son of a wealthy cotton dealer in Philadelphia, who sympathized with the South, and received an appointment at the beginning of the war on the staff of Gen. Jo. Johnson. This general has always made it his home at Wood's house whenever he visited the North, and his son Joshua, the subject of the following adventure, was quite a pet with him. The young man's story was told at an army prayer meeting:

I enlisted in the 13th Illinois Cavalry, Co. A, serving under Gen. Curtis, and being well acquainted with the Southern country and people, and esteemed by him shrewd and trusty, I was often employed at liberal compensation in secret service—in plain English, as a spy. Omitting notice of many exciting scenes and thrilling adventures, I will narrate one. At one time I rode into Little Rock, Ark., and was recognized by two young ladies, formerly acquaintances in Philadelphia, who left that place on account of their rebel sympathies. They hastened to betray me. A squad of cavalry started to pursue me. My horse was in poor condition for a race, for I had already ridden him thirty miles that morning. He outran my pursuers for fifteen miles more and then the noble creature fell dead, and the Philistines were upon me. They had brought a rope to hang me to the nearest tree; but as they came up their leader exclaimed,

"What—Joshua—is that you?"

He was a former companion of my youth, and knew not until then whom he was pursuing. By

JERUSAH:--OR,--The Adventures of an Unsophisticated Youth: CHAPTER ...

Merwin, Mart

Flag of Our Union (1854-1870); Mar 25, 1865; 20, 12; American Periodicals

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a figure in the world which should correspond—with my cognomen!

At the age of sixteen I left my country home and became a resident of the city. I carried with me bashfulness and inexperience—perhaps even a larger portion of each than boys from rural districts usually do; for I had mingled but a little in society of any kind, and was totally unsophisticated in regard to that mystery to many older heads than mine—woman! I had an indistinct idea that the girls were almost angels; and if a fellow could but ingratiate himself with them, and secure the favor of one, his happiness would be complete. In the distance I saw the outlines of such a paradise; but that insurmountable barrier of timidity and bashfulness kept me from rushing forward and entering the asylum.

However, I was to be gradually transformed. A transition from home and home influences to circles of entire strangers soon opened to me new resources and new employments for my leisure; and I eventually learned that the world was simply made up of men and women. As my acquaintances increased and my experience widened, my bashfulness gradually wore away, and I daily acquired a greater familiarity with that most enigmatical of compounds—human nature.

I had chosen the vocation of Franklin, and a three years' apprenticeship was before me. So I determined to go but a little into society, choosing rather to spend my evenings with my books, or my pen; for I had excelled at composition during my last term at school, and had already begun to scribble for the newspapers. On my very first visit home, I carried a copy of the Boston "Story-Teller," containing my maiden sketch, which I took especial pains to show to Aunt Dorothy, just to aggravate her; for I knew that she professed a perfect horror of newspaper stories, and condemned everything readable as novels, except the Bible and "Fox's Book of Martyrs," (the only volumes ever found in her father's house); and from former experience, I was satisfied that she would give me a lecture that would afford me more amusement than benefit.

Aunt Dorothy stared at me with a look of mingled astonishment and horror for a moment, and then exclaimed:

"So that is what comes of being a printer? I always was opposed to your learning that foolish trade. Why, the world is full of nonsensical, sinful books now; and it would be a great blessing if all the printers were dead."

"What would you do for Bibles and hymn-books, aunt?"

She pretended not to hear my question, and continued:

"I knew it would be best so, and told your father so when there was such an ado made over your compositions at school. You'd better been cyphering or studying history."

"Well, my dear aunt, please hear my piece before you condemn it. It may be better than you imagine," I pleaded, opening the sheet.

"I don't care anything about it; I believe newspaper stories are a pack of lies, or nonsense, at least."

Her words were more forbidding than her tone; besides, I knew she had the female trait of curiosity strongly developed; so I presumed upon her attention, and commenced reading my sketch. At the conclusion of each paragraph Aunt Dorothy would exclaim, "What lies! what nonsense!" As I finished and laid down the paper, I asked:

"Now, aunt, what do you think of that?"

"I believe it to be a confounded lie!" she replied, emphatically.

I laughed outright. "That is rather a severe commentary on yourself."

"Why?" she asked, earnestly.

"Because I've heard you tell the circumstance on which it is founded, repeatedly," I replied quickly, bringing my hand down violently upon the table by way of a clincher, very much against the safety of my aunt's pie plates.

"I never heard the story before since I was born into the world," she continued.

I opened the paper again, and re-read the concluding narrations, supplying the true names for the fictitious ones which I had written. A smile flitted across her face as she confessed herself defeated.

"Well, I vow, Hezekiah, you've outdone me once, and have told that correctly; but if Uncle Job's folks should see it, they'd be as mad as hornets with you."

"O, my dear, great aunt, they never read the newspapers; and if they should, they would not recognize it any sooner than you did under the false names," I added, with a roguish leer, escaping through the kitchen door just in time to avoid the dusting-brush Aunt Dorothy had thrown at my head.

Before I returned to the city I acquainted my mother with the encounter I had with Aunt Dorothy. She was very much amused over aunt's horror of newspapers, and assured me that if she did not read the stories, she always read the marriage notices and the matrimonial advertisements; that she not long since had accidentally found upon aunt's table the draft of a note addressed to "a widower without incumbrances," who had advertised for a companion through the columns of the New York Herald; and that she had in her possession a mysterious ambrotype, of which she would give no account.

Perhaps it was not very discreet on the part of my mother to make me acquainted with such matters; for it immediately put into my head the idea of a plan for some rare sport. If I was unsophisticated in regard to the girls, I always had been an adept at mischief, particularly when my aunt was concerned.

I resolved, that, whatever my ancestry might have been, it would reflect nothing to my creditor discredit at this late day; that I must act for myself, and make

Dorothy so prominently before him without a more particular description. She was the youngest sister of my paternal grandfather, who was the oldest of a large family of children; and by one of those coincidences that frequently occur in large families, my great aunt was about the same age as my father. After she reached a certain epoch in maiden life (vulgarly denominated the "first corner"), with no prospect of a speedy matrimonial alliance, she suddenly ignored this item in the family chronology, and made the uninformed believe that she was my father's sister instead of his aunt. Her friends, by common consent, indulged her in the practice of this harmless deception; and my parents always called her by her Christian name. She never allowed my brothers and sisters nor myself to speak of her or to address her as *great-aunt*; and we never called her by that title except when we wished to provoke her.

Aunt Dorothy was now approaching the sober age of forty, and though very plain in her personal appearance, she was not homely. A life of freedom from care and of tolerable ease had left no lines upon her virgin brow, and she could readily pass for a lady of twenty-five, an advantage of which she gladly availed herself. To say that she was wholly free from care, however, would subject her to the censure of a faithless historian; for she had an almost daily, nay, hourly, desire to be married. Ever since I had attained the age of discretion, it had been incorporated into our list of household proverbs, that Aunt Dorothy Smart was ready to accept of the first passable offer; the recent revelations of my mother confirmed it in my own mind, and if the reader has any doubts on the subject, I submit to his perusal the following statements; any woman who will heed matrimonial advertisements, must accept of them as a last resort for the attainment of an end for which her better sense can never justify the means.

When I reached the city I repaired to the Journal office at once and negotiated with the clerk (who was a personal friend of mine) for the insertion of the following advertisement in its next issue:

MATRIMONIAL

A WIDOWER, without incumbrance, about forty years of age, with ample means and plenty of leisure, desires to correspond with a lady who is young, agreeable, sensible and good-looking, with a view to matrimony. Satisfactory reference as to character and means will be produced. Address for two weeks, H. S., JOURNAL office. 3rd Jan19.

The next morning I mailed a copy of the paper to Aunt Dorothy. Agreeably to the promise of the clerk the advertisement had been inserted near the marriage and death notices; but for fear that she might not see it, I sent her a copy of the next issue. This proved unnecessary, for at night, when I called for communications, the clerk with a laugh handed me a dozen delicate little notes, among which I found the following from my aunt:—(she had never received first-class school lessons; but I must give her letter *verbatim*, nevertheless.)

"W.—, June 20th, 18—.

"H. S., DEAR SIR:—On perusing the P—Journal this morning, I see your advertisement for a wife; and I take my pen in hand to inform you that I think I can please you. I am not so young as to be gay and giddy; but I am much younger than you represent yourself to be; I can talk a fact which the operate ~~can always give me the name of~~ and I suppose I can make myself agreeable to one who is agreeable, as to my looks, why that is a delicate matter to speak of, but I can assure you sir that you will be suited on that score, and last, but not least, as to matrimony, I have declined several good offers because they did not exactly suit me; but I have reason to believe that you would be the person I have long looked for; as to means, that is nothing to me to the attainment of a good husband. As a proof of my sincerity, I endorse my true name, and hope you will manifest like confidence in me. Let me hear from you again.

"DOROTHEA SMART."

"Dorothea!" I exclaimed to myself. This was a new idea with my aunt, for she had always written her name—"Dorothy." How I capered round my room; how I laughed to myself in glee over the possession of that letter. Fifty dollars in the best of currency could not have purchased it. So great were my demonstrations of self-gratulation, that my landlady (who knew I was alone) came up, and with a knock, demanded what was the matter. I replied that I had been reading a very funny story, and was laughing over it, when she again left me to my uncontrollable mirth.

At last I calmed down sufficiently to pen an answer to the letter. I informed my anxious correspondent that she had been selected out of a dozen applicants, as "the one with whom I wished to become better acquainted." I knew what would "take" with my aunt, so I "launched out into the deep." I went over the whole ground, and touched upon the points that would please her. I deprecated the gay and giddy butterflies of fashion, who read novels and story papers and knew nothing of real life; I rejoiced that I had at last found a woman who gave evidence of possessing something besides a head full of sickly sentimentalism and nonsense. I knew my aunt was no student of chirography, so I made but a few attempts at concealing my hand. I concluded by informing her, that next to an interview with her, the possession of her ambrotype would satisfy me whether or not she would come up to my wishes; and in case I should be displeased with her looks, she might trust my honor as a gentleman for the safe return of the picture. I signed my name as Henry Sinclair, and despatched the letter by the morning mail.

Two days afterwards I found a package at the post-office directed to my assumed address; and on opening it, I discovered a well-known ambrotype of my aunt, taken two years previous, and consequently representing her somewhat more youthful than she was now; but the reader must not presume that she had any disposition to deceive—she had had none taken since that time, and she lived in the country where daguerrean saloons were not always of easy access. Although the picture was not new to me, the accompanying letter certainly was.

When I reached my room I had another good laugh at my aunt's expense; then my conscience was aroused, and the thought struck me that I might be carrying the joke too far; but after a moment's reflection, I decided, to my own satisfaction, at least, that if she was so imprudent as to answer matrimonial advertisements, she must take the consequences, so I wrote the following:

"P—, June 24th, 18—.

"DEAR MISS SMART:—After a careful examination of your ambrotype, I am satisfied that it would not prove to my advantage to become any better acquainted with you than I already am. However, that we may be square, I send you my picture.

"Truly yours,

HENRY SINCLAIR,

"alias, HEZEKIAH SMART."

I never saw my aunt afterwards. On my next visit home, my mother gave me a severe lecture in regard to trifling with her. She informed me that Aunt Dorothy came in from the post-office one day in a fierce passion, scolding and storming with the fury of a virago; that she accused her of wanton neglect in my education, and that I was destined to the gallows. At my mother's request, she gave her a brief account of the affair, concluding by showing her my letters as proof against me. Then, without waiting for my parent to extenuate my fault by reference to the part she had taken herself, she declared she would not stay another moment under a roof where she was so lightly esteemed; and picking up her effects, she departed forthwith. She never communicated with our family afterwards; but we subsequently learned that she was living with a brother in the State of New York, still a bitter enemy to novels and story-papers, but, nevertheless, partial to the New York Herald.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH I FALL—IN LOVE AND INTO THE SNOW.

The first few months of my life in the city were rather wearisome; but I was gradually becoming accustomed to its excitements and novelties. Business daily brought me in contact with new faces, and I through them frequently obtained a passport to social circles; and before I had been a year from the paternal roof, its associations were comparatively forgotten. But however far away home is, or however attractive are the scenes through which we are called to pass daily, its fireside cannot be entirely forgotten, nor its counsels wholly disregarded; and should there seem to be a danger of this, the summer respite from business and the few weeks spent in revisiting old scenes, serve to awaken childhood memories; so that, though our new residence may be the most fascinating, our birth-place is still the dearest spot on earth.

My three years' bondage eventually came to an end, and I stood forth in all the dignity of a journeyman printer. I had gone but a little into the society of ladies, and was about as unsophisticated as when I first came to the city, my affair with Aunt Dorothy being the only contest in which I ever engaged where woman was a party.

About this time I received a very pressing invitation, by letter, from a relative who resided a few miles from the city, to make an occasional excursion to her cottage home. She represented it as a delightful expedient to break up the monotony and tedium of town life, introducing in her note all those little winning attractions so peculiar to young ladies of the sentimental age. Cousin Isabel Belden, from whom the courtesy came, was a very fascinating young lady, and I half decided to accept the invitation, as affording a favorable opportunity to extend my acquaintance and pass away my leisure.

A few days after I received Cousin Isabel's note, I chanced to meet her in the city, and the invitation was renewed. I pleaded bashfulness, as she was the only member of her family whom I had ever met, and it was very hard for me to make myself agreeable to strangers.

"Pshaw! Hezekiah," she returned, "we're not strangers to you; we all know you, having read your writings with pleasure; and probably should ere this have been on the most intimate terms with you, if you had not cloistered yourself from us, and lived like an oyster, in your dusty printing-office, or in the seven-by-nine room of a city boarding-house. How is it," she continued, "that you introduce into your stories characters who make themselves acquainted with strangers, converse with them, and make love with all the ardor of Romeo, while you profess such incompetency in your individual experience?"

"Why, my dear cousin," I replied, smiling at her saire question, "you know that making love on paper and talking love in reality are two very different things."

"You cannot define the difference," she answered, with a roguish twinkle of her eye; "having tested only one side of the question. If you will come to Riverside, I will give you an opportunity to test the other side."

"Thank you; perhaps I will come out when I have leisure."

"Now, Hez, you're not going to turn me off that way. Say definitely when you will come. Our house is only a few miles out; situated right on the line of

(Written for The Flag of our Union.)

JERUSAH:

—OR,—

The Adventures of an Unsophisticated Youth.

BY MART MERWIN.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH I PROVE A SERIOUS SOURCE OF ANNOYANCE TO MY AUNT DOROTHY.

EVERYBODY, in looking back upon their past history, can recall certain experiences, which, though they awaken a momentary feeling of gratitude for the lesson they may have taught, or the danger they may have revealed, are, nevertheless, humiliating in detail. I, in common with many of the human family, have passed through several such tuitionary ordeals; and one in particular I now propose to relate for the reader's amusement; and, perhaps, if he is keen of observation, he may also draw a lesson of profit from it.

I rejoice in the name of Hezekiah Smart. Though my Christian appellation is a Scriptural one, my surname is not merited according to the Scriptural custom—that of giving names through some individual peculiarity; for, as far back as family tradition goes (if we accept the spiteful assertions of neighborhood gossip), none of my ancestors ever succeeded in "settling the river on fire;" and there is a household story current with a certain great aunt of mine (who will probably remain a "Smart" until her dying day), that my grandfather (against whom she holds an indefinable, life-long pique) "received a number of wet jackets by neglecting to go under cover during heavy falls of rain, although repeatedly urged to do so by his more intelligent and considerate wife." And this story she was always sure to repeat with a malicious air whenever I made any flattering allusion to my ancestry, or anticipated the attainment of any position by virtue of my descent. But I have long since set Aunt Dorothy down as a sour old maid, whose opinion was not to be taken in regard to a hopeful young man, even though that young man were a relative. Although this and similar stories were often repeated by her, containing, perhaps, more of truth than poetry, I came to care nothing for them; but, feeling with the poet, that

"Honor and shame from no condition rise."

I resolved, that, whatever my ancestry might have been, it would reflect nothing to my creditor discredit at this late day; that I must act for myself, and make

the railroad, and the cars run every hour. You can come out in the evening train Saturday, and return early Monday morning, if you choose. All my folks want to see you, and will do their utmost to enable you to have an agreeable time."

"I will come out next Saturday evening," I replied, seeing she was bent on having me fix a time.

"Very well," she replied; "I shall expect you."

The appointed time found me flying over the rails to the quiet little village of Riverside. It was at the close of a beautiful June day. The summer sun was just sinking below the western horizon as I reached the door of Belden Cottage. I had rung the bell and turned to view the beautiful landscape spread out before me. The gentle breeze, which barely stirred the leaves of the luxuriant forest trees, was laden with the perfume of a thousand flowers. The laughter of the children at play on the common before me; the plaintive note of a night bird from the shadows of the neighboring grove, and the monotonous song of the crickets, carried me back to my own country home which I had left, only a few years before, for the coldness and unkindness of the world, and, for the moment, I was ready to give up all my hopes and plans for the future, if I could be placed back beneath that humble roof as I then was. I was startled from my reverie by a gentle voice.

"Why, Hezekiah, is this really you?"

I took the extended hand of Isabel, and assured her that it was veritably her cousin, and that she must now give me credit for courage, promptness and truthfulness, instead of speaking in that questionable manner.

I was led to the little sitting-room, and soon introduced to the other members of the family. Mrs. Belden was a cousin of my father, but having never met her since early boyhood, she seemed almost an utter stranger to me. She had been a widow for several years, but lived very happily with her three children—two sons and a daughter, all grown up—and a maiden sister.

Here we were all gathered around the tea-table, which is one of the best places in the world to induce sociability... In the course of the meal I was called upon to relate my affair with Aunt Dorothy, which I did, under as brilliant coloring as it would admit of, to the amusement of all. Cousin Nathan thought I had taken advantage of age, and declared that he should volunteer as Aunt Dorothy's champion, and some time pay me off for that uncharitable trick. And so the conversation ran from one subject to another, and by the time we returned to the sitting-room, I felt quite at home.

Riverside was a lovely spot, although it was little more than a factory village. It was one of a long succession of manufacturing communities, scattered along the valley of a beautiful river that meandered here and there, and seemed a perfect paradise for cotton mills. Although the stream furnished every advantage of water-power (which was the main point of its value to the princely proprietors, who saw only through utilitarian glasses), that was not its chief attraction to the stranger. It was lined with majestic hills and picturesque valleys, shady groves and fertile farms. The railroad touched the stream at various points, and brought the numerous hamlets in close connection with the neighboring city, so that scores of residences were scattered here and there in the vicinity of the stations, from the plain white cottage to the most modern villa, surrounded with well-dressed gardens and fertile fields. Riverside was made up in this way. The factories, with their usual surroundings of inconvenient and uncomfortable tenement houses, occupied the centre of the village, while the suburbs were adorned with neat dwellings, the homes of merchants and mechanics who were permitted, by the aid of the cars, to spend their business hours in town and their nights with their families; and country seats of those whom fortune had enabled to retire from all active pursuits.

Among these suburban dwellings, in a very pleasant spot, stood Belden Cottage. Before the door towered a stately elm, flanked by a couple of shady horse-chestnuts. A cosy little flower garden adorned the area in front, which gave evidence of taste and careful attention. A few steps back of the house, reached by a narrow lane, was a shady grove, stretching along the river's bank, where lovers took delightful rambles at twilight, and where school-children called wild flowers in summer and hunted nuts in autumn.

The following morning I accompanied Bel (as I abbreviated Isabel) to church, not very enviable privilege for a bashful young man; for I was the "observed of all observers." If the reader has ever visited a country church for the first time, where he was an utter stranger, he knows my impressions and feelings better than I can describe them. Bel's pew was on the broad-aisle, about half-way up, and I reached it with some trepidation. As I glanced to the right, after being seated, there was little Miss Flirt, who met my gaze with a look that seemed to say, "Well, I guess Bel has got a beau now, sure." Then I turned to the left, and there sat Petunia Piper, a sour old maid, who had evidently been scrutinizing me for the last five minutes, and judging from the envy and malice in her eyes, she entertained a very poor opinion as to my pretensions and character.

Becoming disgusted with their curiosity, I turned my eyes towards the pulpit, only to encounter the still more determined gaze of old Mrs. Quizzle, who was turned half round, looking directly at me over her spectacles; nor was she in the least abashed when our eyes met, for she did not turn her head until she had measured me, physically and mentally, to her own satisfaction. And these characters had their counterparts in all quarters of the house, who kept quizzing

me all through service, very much to my annoyance.

But while I was the object of wonder to many, only one face in the whole congregation particularly arrested my attention. A young lady, of course. There she stood in the choir, and my eyes were ever and anon wandering to her during the singing. I was continually singing out her voice instead of listening to the sentiment of the hymn. When the preacher was speaking of the vanity of all earthly things, I could not help thinking what a delicate little package of vanity was put up beneath a showy label, and made the chief attraction to me among the singers; and when he warmed with his subject, and spoke rapturously of heavenly things, neither his eloquence nor his rhetoric could lift my eyes or thoughts higher than the orchestra. She was not beautiful, but there was a quiet grace about her that fascinated my unsophisticated heart unconsciously.

As the congregation were passing out after service, Bel lingered in the vestibule, saying that she wished to speak to a friend. Nearly all the people had dispersed before the individual she sought made her appearance. At last a young lady stepped from the lighted room into the shadows of the vestibule, and Bel started forward, exclaiming:

"O, here you are at last, Sophia; I feared I should have to go without seeing you, as Herz began to grow impatient—Mrs. Rhoades, allow me to present my cousin, Mr. Smart."

A single glance satisfied me that none other than the veritable idol of my thoughts stood there, returning my bow with a sweet smile and a graceful curtsey.

I ventured to remark upon the weather, to which she responded in a very musical tone, and the next moment Bel had her beneath the shadow of a pillar, pouring some sweet little privacy into her listening ear that seemed to interest them both very much.

Miss Rhoades' home being in the same direction that Bel and I went, we had the pleasure of her company. As we were passing over the area in front of the church, a single footstep was heard descending the steps. A partial turn of my head satisfied me that it was Miss Petunia, who commenced talking to the sexton about a sick child of his in a tone more loud than sympathetic, and promising to call and see it the next day, she followed on close behind us. My cousin and the young lady gave each other a very knowing look, followed by a smile, while I remarked that "one of the descendants of Mother Eve was near by, evidently looking for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

We soon came to the cottage door which Miss Rhoades called home. I expressed the hope that we should see her at church in the afternoon, and bade her "good morning." Seeing that she was pursued, the young lady hastily entered the gate; but Miss Petunia Piper was too quick for her, and we heard her exclaim as we turned a corner:

"So you got an introduction to Isabel's beau, Sophia?"

We simply heard Miss Rhoades' "Yes indeed!" in response; for we were now out of sight and hearing, and I can report no more.

I extemporized a short dissertation on quizzing and gossiping in general, and gave Bel my opinion of Miss Petunia and her kin, without a very close selection of language. My cousin ventured a Scripture quotation in regard to "backbiting." I replied that I considered it a virtue to backbite such contemptible creatures as she was, and that their characters could gather no tarnish from the opinions of decent people. We reached the door, and our discussion was suspended.

I need not go into detail as to my history for the next six months. I will merely mention that my first visit to Riverside proved to be so pleasant that it was not many days before I repeated it, and ere long the conductor began to look upon me as a regular customer; that I eventually became very intimate with Miss Rhoades, and most of my time, while at the village, was spent in her presence; that fate subsequently gave me an introduction to Miss Petunia Piper, and she ever after took special delight in quizzing me, whenever she had an opportunity, and kept a correct diary of my visits to Riverside. She had even fixed a time for the marriage of Sophia and myself; but when the time came, we were too obstinate to make her prophecy true. Then she declared that she was satisfied we were engaged, and that the wedding would assuredly come off some time.

The summer and autumn gradually wore away, and winter had come, and still my visits to Belden Cottage, ostensibly, were continued; but, however, my cousins saw very little of me—my time was mainly passed at a neighboring cottage.

One evening in midwinter, I made my bi-weekly visit to Riverside, to encounter two persons whose presence boded no peace to me. These were no others than cousins Gregory and Nathan, home from college for a few days, full of fun and ready for a "high time," and evidently glad that I had come out, that they might have a victim on whom to exercise their pranks. I merely shook hands with them, parried off a sally or two in regard to the importance of the mission that brought me seven miles from the city in a snow storm, and darted out of the door to my usual destination.

I knew I should be expected back again that night, but what I should experience before I retired I knew not. I feared some kind of a serenade would be extemporized for the annoyance of Sophia and myself; but as snow was falling, and the mercury was not at a very agreeable point, the youths did not choose to venture on such a mission. About ten I bade Sophia "good night." Snow was now falling quite fast, and buttoning my overcoat close about me, I started on a

dog-trot for my cousin's. I had proceeded but a few steps, when I became aware of two objects approaching me in the opposite direction. A second glance assured me that they were a couple of drunken men enveloped in long coats, reeling home from a carouse.

As I neared them they seemed to be talking very fast. I sheered out one side to avoid contact with them; but the foremost one threw out his arm and attempted to hold me. I whirled out of his grasp, but so quickly that I lost my balance and fell prostrate in a snow-drift, while my hat rolled in an opposite direction. I instantly regained my feet, and seizing my beaver, I started on the run for the cottage. For the first time the thought struck me that the strangers might be Gregory and Nathan, and I turned to address them as they were pursuing me; but a second glance at the long cloaks and slouched hats reassured me that they were *bone-fide* ruffians, and that I had better venture upon no altercation with them.

I entered the house in a very excited state, my overcoat covered with snow, and my hat looking decidedly the worse for recent wear. Bel exclaimed:

"Why, Hezekiah, what's the matter?"

"O, nothing serious," I replied, endeavoring to appear calm.

"I don't believe you; your overcoat and hat look as though you had been rolling in a snow-drift; and if you had seen your grandfather's ghost, your face could not be any whiter—now, Herz, what adventure have you met with?"

"I was attacked by a couple of drunken men, and in attempting to avoid them, I tumbled down."

"Mercy! let me brush the snow from you," she said, sympathetically, as she led me into the hall and commenced a vigorous sweeping.

"Upon a second thought," I continued, uttering a word between each stroke of her brush, "I imagined the ruffians might be Gregory and Nathan in disguise, and I am more than half inclined to that belief now."

"That cannot be," Bel returned, indifferently, brushing more resolutely than ever; "for they are in their room, having a smoke."

"Then I was mistaken; but could I have accounted for the disguise, I would have been willing to take oath that they were Gregory and Nathan Belden; for the figures answered to theirs in height, exactly."

"Here, boys!" called Bel, opening the door, through which the fumes of tobacco came in a perfect avalanche; here, boys, your characters are defined, and I advise you to come out and defend yourselves!"

"What have you to say about our characters?" exclaimed Gregory, making his appearance in the hall, immediately followed by Nathan, both of whom were still puffing at half-smoked cigars.

"Why, here is Cousin Herz," explained Bel, with ill-concealed merriment—"been enjoying the sunshine of Sophia's smile, until he has no correct knowledge of material things—leaves her side in a state of exstasy—sees a brace of intoxicated men who rudely molest him, thereby reminding him that he is still a resident of this sinful world, instead of paradise, and consequently frighten him half out of his wits—comes here in a shockingly dilapidated condition, and after I spend all my strength in removing the snow from his broadcloth, he has the audacity and ingratitude to assert it, as his 'belief,' that my brothers have been out on this inclement night, playing tricks upon him; now, what have you to say in your defense?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the young men, loudly.

"Now you are too bad, Bel," I pleaded. "I exonerated them as soon as you said they were in the house."

"Yes," interposed Nathan, removing his cigar, "Bel expelled us from the parlor, because she expected her adorable this evening; and, he has the weakness to never use the weed, and the still greater weakness to be annoyed by the smell of tobacco smoke, we were obliged to enjoy our cigars alone; and as Jasper Sopus Copeland, A. M., is not so venturesome as yourself, she has enjoyed *herself* alone!" And thus he adroitly turned the laugh upon my tormentor, much to my relief.

I gave them a detailed account of my adventure, over which we had a good laugh, and retired. From the adroit expressions they all made use of, I laid my head upon my pillow that night with the belief that I had been really beset by a couple of ruffians, and that I had met with a very narrow escape from an unknown fate, and I experienced a feeling of gratitude that the day had terminated so pleasantly; and so I closed my eyes on earthly things to wander in dreamland.

The next morning at breakfast, the boys and Bel were remarkably full of fun; and they were continually giving utterance to certain mysterious expressions, accompanied by various winks that were all Greek to me; but I asked no questions, deeming them to be college or local bywords, and of no interest except to the initiated.

While I was putting on my overcoat, and getting ready to return to the city, Gregory and Nathan suddenly left the room. In a moment the door opened, and they reappeared, each enveloped in a long, old-fashioned cloak and slouched hat, laughing in the height of merriment. They were really the drunken men I had encountered the evening before. I had been duped, as well as frightened, and acknowledged it as gracefully as I could. They explained that they were out for an hour, wandering up and down the street, waiting for my coming; that they were half frozen when I did, at last, leave "Maple Cot" and make my appearance; that they came near exploding with laughter, when I tumbled into a snow-drift; that they, through an open window, got into the house almost as soon as I did; that my overcoat took

a great deal more brushing than was really necessary, just to allow them time to remove their disguises; that they cut a cigar in two pieces, to suit the occasion (so that each should appear to have one half smoked); and, finally, that they thought it necessary to have a denouement to the affair, as they wished to entertain Sophia with an account of my nocturnal adventure—and so they graciously revealed the part they bore in it. I thanked them for their thoughtfulness; but begged them to say nothing to Miss Rhoades about it. And assuring Nathan, that he had been quite successful as Aunt Dorothy's champion and avenger, I bade them a hasty "good morning," and darted out of the door at the sound of the distant whistle, reaching the station just in time to secure a seat in the departing train.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH I LOSE MY EQUILIBRIUM AND MY SWEET-HEART.

I DETERMINED that my next trip to Riverside should be unknown to my relatives, as they were inclined to rally me continually upon the frequency of my visits, declaring that they were prompted with a view to a new relationship, instead of simply paying respects to old friends. And also, for the sake of romance, I resolved to go unexpected by Sophia.

Accordingly, one cold Thursday evening, I left the office earlier than usual, and sought my lodgings to make the necessary preparations. The thermometer stood at two degrees below zero, and the mercury was still falling; but love robs one of all accuracy of measurement, and I did not pause to consider that my mission would not warrant the discomforts to which I was thus exposing myself. However, I could not but realize that it was a bitter cold night, and I had not gone ten steps, before I halted, buttoned my overcoat closer about me, and was balancing in my mind whether to go or stay. In this hesitating mood I pursued my walk, braving a northwest blast, and was still undecided, when I reached Madam Churchill's boarding-house. I had changed my mind a dozen times ere my toilet was completed; but the desire to see Sophia finally prevailed, and I descended to the dining-room. Tea was not ready; how provoking! for it only wanted twenty minutes of car-time. It was the first time I ever had to wait for my supper. The five minutes that elapsed before Bridget swung the ponderous bell, were long, and were noted by seconds. I swallowed a cup of tea and a hot biscuit; threw on my overcoat, and seizing my hat, I darted through the hall, and was soon at the depot. The boarders must have noticed my haste; but I didn't care. I was in season, however, and should have been had I not hurried at all; for an incoming train, which was overdue fifteen minutes, must arrive ere the train I wished to take would leave the depot. A heavy snow had fallen a few days before, and as there had been no moderate weather since to settle it together, it was frozen in its flaky state, and was continually blown about, filling up the tracks, and interfering with the regularity of every train.

A strong breeze from the northwest was now filling the air with clouds of the feathery element. Nearly a half-hour was passed in waiting at the station, during which period I had repeatedly changed my mind. One moment I resolved to dart out of the car, and give up my visit; and the next, I was chained to the seat with the anticipation of the pleasure it would afford me to see Sophia, and pass the evening in her society. At last, when my patience was about exhausted, the train started. I looked at my watch, and found it was seven o'clock. I arose to my feet, and looked towards the door; the thought had struck me, "Sophie will not be expecting me at the hour which I must necessarily reach her cottage, and I can safely get out, even now." Then I imagined how pleasant it would be to surprise her; and resuming my seat, the locomotive was soon going at a speed that banished all thoughts of getting out, even if I had been so inclined.

As long, after stopping at one or two stations, the conductor called out, "Riverside," and I, with the few remaining passengers, got out; for the train went no further. I immediately turned my face towards Maple Cot. The weather seemed to be growing colder and colder every minute. There were but a few persons in the street, and these hurried along at a rapid pace, evidently seeking some more agreeable retreat than the open air. I ran for the cottage as fast as my feet would carry me, and soon stood on the step, ringing the bell, with a feeling of mingled trepidation and pleasure. It was the first time I had ever come to Riverside unknown to my relatives, and unannounced to my sweetheart. Sophia answered my summons, and was evidently surprised to see me.

She declared, as she led me in, that I must be "kitchen company," for having neglected to advise her of my coming, no preparations had been made to warm any other apartment, and it would be useless to attempt to make the parlor comfortable that evening. So I was shown into the kitchen. I found the room occupied by Mrs. Rhoades, and a young man who was introduced to me as Mr. Kilburn, neighbor; the three had evidently been having a very agreeable time around a well-filled stove. It was soon manifest that I had interrupted the flow of conversation; for the gentleman said but little, and sat very uneasily in his seat. In a short time he arose, and taking his hat, declared he must go. As he passed out, he cast a hasty glance at me, which I met; and as he bade me good evening with a faint smile, I interpreted his thoughts as follows: "Well, young man, if you have come seven miles on such a night

as this to pass an hour with your sweetheart, I will be the last person to trespass on your valuable time." In a very few minutes afterwards, Mrs. Rhoades also seemed to be of the same mind, and retired.

Now, what cared I for falling mercury or driving winds without, as I sat before that kitchen-stove, filled with hickory-wood, with Sophia seated on the lounge beside me? What cared I for the drifting snow and uncertainties of travel on the morrow, in the happiness of the present hour? The imaginative reader, doubtless, has presumed that the "question was popped" on that propitious occasion, and arrangements made for the wedding; that plans for future happiness were laid, and the prospects of life discussed. But, if so, he has been too hasty. I thought of all these things; but when I essayed to speak, something arrested my powers of speech, and I, for a moment, was dumb. I could converse upon gossip, news, national affairs, books, etc., but the subject that occupied the largest space in my mind was unapproachable. Whether this arose from my constitutional bashfulness, or whether I was under a spell of fate, I am unable, at this late day, to determine. Although the entire evening passed very pleasantly, I felt as though its object was unaccomplished. I seemed to have made a great effort for the attainment of a certain end, and now, from lack of moral courage, must leave that purpose still pending in suspense.

I informed Sophia, as she was about to show me to my room, that I wished this visit to remain a secret, so far as possible; that I must depart with the first train in the morning, not only on this account, but because business of importance demanded my presence. She assured me, that, so far as it was in her power, my first desire should be attended to; and as to the other desire, her mother would awake at an early hour, and would undoubtedly call me in time for the ears.

Summoning words for one more attempt to declare my love, I sought to give them utterance.

"Sophia," I exclaimed, after she had led me to my room, placed the lamp in my hand, and turned to leave me.

"What?" she asked, as she paused, pronouncing that monosyllable in the most provoking tone I ever heard, which completely dispelled what little courage I had, and I only responded:

"Remember to have me called at half-past five o'clock."

Perhaps the reader imagines that I passed an hour in reflections, after I was snugly ensconced between the sheets; but such was not the case. A few half-awful expressions of self-condemnation over my want of manliness, and I was off to dreamland.

The next morning I was awakened by Sophia knocking at my door. Pausing for a moment to determine where I was, I lighted the lamp, and looked at my watch. It wanted fifteen minutes of six, and the first train left in half an hour. By the temperature of my room, I was satisfied that the weather had not moderated in the least. As I was dressing, I wondered how the Esquimaux could live in their arctic home, when the ardor of love was not proof against our moderately cold weather. But I was soon in the kitchen, where Sophia sat by the stove, seemingly as bright and cheerful as on the evening before. She bade me good morning with a winsome smile, and informed me that if I must go in the first train, she should be compelled to waive the courtesy of offering me a breakfast. I thanked her, snatched a kiss, and buttoned my overcoat close around me, departed.

As I stepped out upon the snow, it snapped beneath my tread like the dry branches of the forest. Having passed beyond the shadow of the cottage, the northwest wind came driving through the trees and seemed to be armed with needles, so piercing were its blasts. For a moment, I was on the point of returning to Mrs. Rhoades's fireside; but I immediately banished that idea as a boyish weakness.

When I reached the station, disappointment frowned upon me. During the night, the dry, crispy snow had blown upon the track, and had lodged here and there with the compactness of sand-drifts, and the station-master thought there would be no train to the city until noon. A thermometer hanging outside of the building, stood at eighteen degrees below zero. What to do, was the question that presented itself to me now, very forcibly. To go back, would certainly subject me to exposure and to the consequent ridicule of Cousin Bel; for she was an inveterate tease, and this visit, added to my recent adventure with her brothers, would afford her capital for quite a comedy.

To remain in the depot for six hours or more would be inadmissible; and to start on foot for the city would be almost fool-hardy. After due reflection, however, I resolved to walk to Pulaski village, a distance of two miles, where a half-hourly stage usually ran between that place and the city.

Striking upon the track, I started off at a brisk pace.

Though the snow was drifted, it was so frozen that I could readily walk upon the surface. I experienced no discomfort from the cold, only at exposed points, where the northwest blast came sweeping across my path, tingling my ears with a sensation more acute than agreeable.

When I reached Pulaski, I was again doomed to disappointment. A stage had started for the city; but after reaching the distance of half a mile, was obliged by the drifts to return, bringing back a load of provoked passengers.

But I resolved that I would not be dependent on stages or railroads; and as I had accomplished two miles of the journey very readily, I determined to keep on, and prove that pedestrian locomotion was the most reliable, after all; in fact, I had founded a

question for debate upon the theory, and had concluded to present it to our lyceum (I belonged to one in the city) at the next meeting. But subsequent events robbed my theory of its poetry, and the lyceum, in consequence has never been entertained by its discussion.

As I passed beyond the suburbs of the village, and reached the open turnpike, the keenness of the air became very apparent. The cheerless blasts came sweeping across the plain on my right, and for a while my ears tingled severely; but otherwise, I suffered no discomfort whatever; for the rapidity with which I walked, kept up a lively circulation of my blood. A mile and a half, which was quickly passed over, brought me in sight of the toll-gate. The keeper, as I neared the gate, came out of his warm office, and stood by the door. I quickly imagined that, from the absence of customers that morning, he was glad to welcome a human being, even though the traveller brought no pennies to his pocket. But I soon learned that this act was prompted by other motives; for when I came within speaking distance, he exclaimed:

"Young man, both your ears are frozen!"

At first, I made no reply. Had he deliberately doubled up his fist and knocked me down without a word, I could not have been more astonished. I removed my gloves, and placing my hands upon the sides of my head, found I had no ears, but instead of those organs of beauty and usefulness, a pair of horny protuberances that I could have rudely broken off. What a humiliating transition I was thus subjected to, in the presence of that coarse, curious, unsympathizing man—after dwelling for the last twelve hours in the seventh heaven of love, to be awakened to the mundane reality of a pair of frozen ears! No wonder that my countenance fell.

At last I found utterance, and exclaimed:

"What shall I do?"

"Just put on a bit of snow and hol' it there for a while; that is the quickest way to take the frost out," the man replied, with the air of a physician administering a prescription in a critical case. "A man came along here yesterday, with his souse, as white as you; but a poultice of snow made Jack leave."

A smile must have flitted across my face, for I almost laughed within. At first it had seemed to me that I had met with a great misfortune; but on realizing that there was such a simple and sure remedy at hand, it reduced the mishap to insignificance, and restored my heart to almost its wonted lightness.

I quickly seized both hands full of snow, and entering the toll-keeper's office, I paced the floor for half an hour, with the frosty curative pressed upon my ears. What passed through my mind during that brief period, might be interesting to the reader, but I decline to reveal it. I could hold no conversation with my benefactor; but I gave him an occasional look of gratitude, which I presume he readily interpreted. If Cousin Bel could have peeked through one of those small windows, and seen my agitated manner and woe-begone countenance, how she would have been amused! With what a pathetic description of my appearance she would have interested Sophia on the first opportunity!

When the frost was entirely out of my ears, I tied a handkerchief over them, and thanking the toll-keeper for his timely information and advice, I resumed my way towards the city. By this time the mercury had risen a trifle; but the wind was still blowing fresh; and I had gone but half a mile, when a fierce blast (which swept directly across my path) suddenly lifted my hat from my head, and sent it rolling upon the surface of the snow, across an adjoining field. I endeavored to pursue it, but this was a more difficult task than I had at first imagined; for, while the crust of the snow readily bore me along the road, it nevertheless was softer and deeper in the field, and I soon found myself sinking to the waist at every step. The covering came off my ears, and they were again exposed to the freezing air. Ere long I became completely exhausted with my exertions to recover my flying "beaver," when the thought struck me that should there be some pit or other concealed danger in my pathway, my fate would be exceedingly doubtful; and, casting one "long, lingering look" after my fast retreating "tile," now almost hidden to view in the distance, with an ocean of snowy waste between it and myself, I was forced to give it up as lost, and retrace my steps to the highway. Again, protecting my ears with the handkerchief, I continued my lonely tramp, now completely robbed of its romance by my mishaps.

I stopped at a cottage on the roadside, and begged an old cap. The whole household—father, mother and seven children—were gathered around the kitchen fire, and as I hinted at my misfortunes (which I felt obliged to do), the roughhous winks that went round the circle seemed to add to my chagrin, and I was glad to take a hasty departure.

As I passed out of the gate, a milkman came along, and invited me to a seat upon his sled. I was now weary enough to accept, and sinking into a reverie, I did not speak until the hum of the busy streets surrounded me, and thanking the man for my ride, I sought my lodgings.

By the time I entered Mrs. Churchill's sitting-room, my ears had swollen badly, and it was useless to attempt to hide my misfortune. I had to recount my adventures to my kind-hearted landlady, who was all sympathy and pity, and did not even smile at a single passage in the drama; and all the phials and boxes in a huge medicine-chest were overhauled, and a dozen different "cure-alls," one after another, recommended for my case. I finally selected an ointment with which I was familiar, and bound up my ears.

But when the boarders came in to dinner, I was subjected to a different ordeal. I received anything but sympathy from them. Harry Brainerd questioned the genuineness of my lady's love, to turn me out to the "cold charities of the world," on such a morning as that. Tom Clark suggested that I might pay my board bill in "frozen sou's." Oliver Davis wished to take my cap to the hatter, and palm it off as the latest Parisian style. And so each new-comer caught the spirit of merriment, and "brought down the table" with a laugh at my expense, all of which I bore with as good a grace as I could assume with a pair of aching ears.

Fearing that my employer would be at a loss to account for my absence, I sat down and wrote the following note:

"Friday morn. Jan. 16, 18—

"Mr. G.—Business of importance called me out of town last evening, and as I was obliged to walk in this morning, I unfortunately froze my ears, which has rendered me unfit for business to-day, so I must crave your indulgence for my absence until to-morrow morning. In haste, HEEZEKIAH SMART."

My employer, who had been "posted up" as to my "important business" out of town, deemed this a capital occasion for a joke, and (as I afterwards learned) immediately took my note into the composing room (where I was employed), and read it aloud, so that all heard its contents, and made it the foundation for "brilliant imaginations," as will soon be shown.

Before night my ears were swollen very badly, and I was fearful of being unfit for duty the next day; but with the careful nursing I received from Mrs. Churchill, I found them reduced to quite a respectable size, when I awoke the following morning, and though still painful, I determined to go to the office.

As I entered the composing-room, I was greeted with "three cheers," then each man came up and carefully examined my ears, making comments on my misfortune. After harassing me about ten minutes with numerous questions and observations, the substance of which were, "How came 'Jerusha' to be so inconsiderate as to drive you from her side on such a cold morning?" I will add here—*par parenthèse*—that "Jerusha" had been substituted for the unknown name of my sweetheart, and hardly an hour of the day had passed for several weeks without its utterance by some of the types; and my experiences for the last twenty-four hours, already too well known to them, was doomed to make it a constant "catchword," in the establishment. I commenced work, and had settled myself into the belief that my terrors were over, when Jethro Bowers, a clownish wag, who perpetrated all the practical jokes of the office, seated himself leisurely in the centre of the room, and taking a manuscript from his pocket, he read the following doggerel parody, amid the applause of all hands:

JERUSHA!

"Cold blew the northern wintry blast,
As o'er the road a young man passed;
And ever and anon he said,
Raising his hands to shield his head—

"Jerusha!"

"The dence wind blew keen, higher,
As onward sped our Hezekiah;
Yet still the cry, both loud and shrill,
Echoed around from hill to hill—

"Jerusha!"

"He through Palaski village hied;
The people, amazed, to him cried;
He heard them not, but hastened on—
Still shrieking in a louder tone—

"Jerusha!"

"A man rushed out into the street,
And kindly bade him to retreat;
He turned his head, sent back the cry,
Ringing it loud as he went by—

"Jerusha!"

"Don't cross the pike," another said;
"You'll freeze the ears from off your head!"

"Twas all in vain, for he rushed,

And from his lips the sound still gushed—

"Jerusha!"

"At length the wind seized on his hat,
And sent it rolling o'er the flat;

He followed it with longing eyes,

And though fatigued, yet still he cries—

"Jerusha!"

"With doleful look, he saw it fly,
For scarce three weeks had flitted by,

Since five dollars for it he paid,

And now in snow its grave was made!

"J-e-r-u-s-h-a!"

"A house he spied upon the road,
And at its door anon he stood:

He knocks, and the household appear,

Crying, "Stranger, what brings you here?"

"Jerusha!"

"A hat! a hat!" adds Hezekiah,
As he warmed himself at the fire;

A hat was found, and he went on,

Murmuring, ever and anon—

"Jerusha!"

"He reached his home—both ears were froze;

His cheeks were blanched, and blue his nose;

He staggered in upon the floor,

And faltered, as he closed the door—

"J-e-r-u-s-h-a!"

MORAL

"Ye swains who value aught your ears,
I tell you what to me appears;

Scan well the mere 'ry ere you start,

To see the loved one of your heart,

In winter!"

I leave the reader to imagine my feelings. I had listened to this burlesque in silence, while all hands responded to each stanza with a fresh burst of merriment. It was a wonder to me how the author, whatever he was, succeeded in getting the statements so correct; for had I given him a detailed account of my adventures, he could not have accomplished it more admirably. Either he had, by some mysterious means, been informed of all the circumstances, or else he possessed the faculty of guessing with even more than the nicely usually ascribed to the "Yankee persuasion."

I was satisfied that the reader was not the author; but after carefully scanning the faces of all present, I was led to believe that a spectacled, gray-haired, Benjamin Franklin-looking type, over in one corner of the room, who had been very attentive to his "copy" all through the reading of the document, was the composer of it. He made no observations upon it; but the continual grin on his face, and his affected indifference, were strong circumstantial evidence against him. But little work was done that day, and the refrain of "Jerusha" was a source of mirth for the entire office.

I wrote to Sophia that evening, giving her a minute account of my experiences after leaving her cottage, concluding my letter with a "copy" of the parody. I begged of her not to say a word to my cousins, as Bel would torture me to madness, did she know the circumstances.

I received a reply from my sweetheart a few days afterwards, who expressed much sympathy over my misfortunes, and hoped I would soon recover from the unpleasant effects of my rash journey. She claimed exoneration from any imputation which might seem to rest against her, as both her mother and herself would gladly have had me remain at their fireside until the weather had moderated, and reminded me of the cordiality of their invitations on that eventful morning, for me to do so.

One morning, about two weeks after this affair, I entered the office with the bandages all removed from my ears, exclaiming:

"Richard's himself again!"

"Jerusha!" from several mouths, was all the response I met with.

On my case lay a letter for me, written in an unmistakable hand. I quickly broke the seal, for something whispered to me that its contents were important. It proved to be a dismissal from Sophia. Though couched in as mild language as possible, it was, nevertheless, colder than frozen ears.

I, an unsophisticated youth, had learned one truth—that women are changeable beings. I had received every assurance, as far as action can go, that I was an accepted lover; but I was now requested to discontinue my visits to Maple Cot altogether. Yes, my own dear Sophia, in whom I had so fondly trusted, had changed. It was a bitter lesson, but one, however, that nine-tenths of our side of the human family learn, in nearly the same way, somewhere between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five. (Reader, am I correct?)

I replied to her note; but I know not what I wrote. Though Cousin Bel questioned me in regard to my affairs, I observed the strictest silence, and begged her not to annoy me by referring to Sophia. It was not long, however, before she heard of the parody on "Excelsior," which she ever after took a peculiar pleasure in repeating whenever I was present.

But Bel was not my only tormentor. A few weeks after my dismissal, I received the following note. I did not recognize the hand at first; but before I had devoured the contents, I felt that an angry relative was down on me with vengeance.

"U—, June 9th, 18—

"DASTARDLY SCOUNDREL.—I was on a short visit to Riverside a few days ago, and I heard about your adventures, and I said 'good—good.' Any Young Man what abuses his relatives will never succeed with the ladies; and I hope the success you have met with in Riverside, may be the kind you will have until you come down on your knees to me, and beg my forgiveness. When you think of your 'mitten' out there, you can think of how you trifled with me.

"Your perpetual tormentor,

"DOROTHY SMART."

"P. S. as you write tales, I would suggest that you write one about yourself. You might illustrate it with a picture of your long legs rolling over in the snow, or chasing your hat over the fields, hollering 'jerushy'—I will take two copies."

D. S."

THE BARONET'S WIFE.: CHAPTER I.

Smith, Christopher A

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[COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.]

THE BARONET'S WIFE.

BY CHRISTOPHER A. SMITH.

CHAPTER I.


HIFTY years ago I commenced my professional career of medicine, with the ridiculous blunder of purchasing what is popularly called the "good-will" of the district. I could have had it on precisely the same terms on which my predecessor had created it. My neighbors were benevolence itself, and—short of being at any time, within my recollection, in the least indisposed—did everything in their power to make me comfortable and happy. There was excellent trout fishing, of which certain indistrim-
otters, and myself, seemed sole proprietors; and between us the best feeling always prevailed, they sparing my favorite pools, and I delicately avoiding the immediate neighborhood of their dwellings; while my practice, which comprised two healthy farms, a robust toll-house, and the beer-shop, left ample leisure for my favorite sport, besides watching my busier neighbors.

Do not imagine that the parties I have referred to represented the entire population of the district. Somewhere among the trees lurk two little villages, one, in right of its superior size, known as Great Covey, the other, availing itself of the fact of its dozen dwellings being disposed in two ranks, calling itself Covey-le-Street. The spirit of rivalry between these two powerful communities was constantly breaking out in various ways, and so bitter was the jealousy that, at one period, scarcely any intercourse was permitted between them; a state of things the more to be regretted since (a curious fact) the society of the greater Covey was composed almost entirely of bachelors, while that of Covey-le-Street embraced exclusively ladies yet unsummoned from the awaiting ranks of spinsterhood."

With this little non-community I had no professional concern. The whole was presided over by one of the bachelors, brethren, who, tolerated as a necessary evil, went and came between the two camps, a just object of jealousy and suspicion to both. Charley Tincture was by nature a merry, pleasant little fellow, and, being only fifty-seven, was looked upon by the elder brethren of Great Covey as a little more than a boy. Nevertheless, it was now thirty-five years since Charley had been jilted, and had cast from his soul every thought of matrimony. Many a pleasant evening have I passed in Charley's society, at his snug lodging over the post-office (he was rich enough to have had a good house to himself, but preferred that celibate flavor which attaches to lodgings), and to this circumstance I owe the power of making you acquainted with the story of Mournivale.

That vast old mansion, after being for some time untenanted, had, just before my arrival, passed into the absolute possession of Sir George Corsellis. This gentleman had held a high military post in India, and had brought home a reputation the reverse of prepossessing. He was represented as a stern, proud individual, gloomy and unsocial in disposition, a tyrant in his profession—a tyrant in his home. He had (said rumor, coming down like a black mist before him) resigned his command, in the hope of averting a threatened inquiry into some undue exercise of authority—something, it was even whispered, scarcely distinguishable from what men call murder—and he had come hither, with his lady, intending, if unmetested, to pass the remainder of his days among the deep woods of Mournivale.

The very first proceedings of the new proprietor

were singular enough to provoke comment. He had fixed midnight for his arrival at the mansion with his family; directing the land-steward, Harper, who had managed the property for some years, and whom he had retained in office, to be in attendance at that hour, and alone.

Precisely at twelve, a hollow rumble of wheels came up from the grass-grown avenue, and Harper, throwing open the tall iron gates which gave immediate approach to the house, admitted a procession consisting of three gloomy old coaches, and a black van. From the first of these vehicles alighted three dark figures, so closely muffled that it was only by a comparison of height that the steward understood them to represent his master (whom, indeed, he had already seen) and two females, one of a stature almost diminutive. Both, on entering the house, retired instantly to a suite of apartments upon which a regiment of painters and decorators had been employed for at least a month.

The other carriages were filled with domestics, English and foreign, who immediately, without exchanging a word, set to work in their different departments, as if they had lived at Mournivale all their previous lives. So quaint and singular was the whole proceeding, that the simple-minded steward felt as if he were moving about in the midst of a band of beings of a different nature—whose supernatural gifts placed them alike beyond his help and control. They made civil gestures, and seemed to regard him with consideration enough; but none of them, none even of the English, spoke directly to him. And the language that did reach his ear had a curious rolling accent such as he had never heard.

Determined to break the spell, Harper singled out a member of the mysterious company who appeared to discharge the office of cook, and who, being fattish, might prove good-tempered. Accosting her as she glided by, he civilly inquired by what name he should address her.

"Morgan le Fay," replied the woman, sharply, baring her glistening teeth in a sort of snarl.

"Morgan Liffey!" thought Harper. "Irish, eh?" Feeling, or fancying, that his presence was not acceptable to the new comers, the excellent steward, who at present occupied one of the keepers' lodges, took a hasty leave, and withdrew.

"Hot dinners at half-past one in the morning!" thought Mr. Harper, as he tumbled into bed; "I wonder at what time they sup!"

bench, and, with cool, superior nods, took his leave, not to appear again. But Sir Hugh Quickset was silenced.

"Under a cloud," affirmed old Purkiss, of Great Covey, a retired solicitor, whose mental habit inclined to the suspicious. (If report were to be trusted, none had enjoyed better opportunities of judging what might be the aspect of a gentleman under the aforesaid atmospherical pressure than Mr. Purkiss himself.) But a royal duke who was staying in the country, rode across fifteen miles to visit Mournivale, stayed half the day, and walked through Covey-le-Street arm in arm with his host, in earnest conversation—Mr. Purkiss was howled out.

Intense became the curiosity excited by the manifest desire of Sir George to conceal the course of his domestic life from every eye. The powers of conjecture were exhausted in imagining theories of explanation for the complete seclusion in which the two ladies especially, were understood to live. In respect to this, the steward, Harper, was as profoundly ignorant as everybody else. Not only had he never seen his lady's face or heard her voice, but no intelligible allusion to her among the servants had ever reached his ear. He knew, however, that a creole maid, called Elsa, was his principal attendant, and that she occasionally gave audience to Morgan le Fay.

"My lady calls," the latter would say, with a start; sometimes amid the clatter of the kitchen; sometimes when not a sound but the ticking of the clock broke the dead hush. And away she would hasten.

Harper observed that none of the domestics ever went abroad, except on Sundays, when such as were English attended the little church, and, service over, marched back again, being re-admitted by the huge Dutch porter, Hans Troek, who never quitted his post by night or day, and the monotony of whose presence inspired Harper with such an insane desire to kick him, that, but for his own native slowness of apprehension, Herr Troek must have read it in his face twenty times a day. Harper had to pass him so often, for on him devolved almost all the communication that was held with the outer world. In the forenoon the steward transacted with his master any business relating to the estate. After that, he executed commissions for Morgan le Fay. At nine in the evening Harper found that he was expected to take his leave; and what went on after that, in the mysterious household, was a strange and gloomy secret.

CHAPTER II.

THE external doings of the new proprietor were equally remarkable. It had been decided in the neighborhood that one of his first acts of ownership would be to thin the overgrown woods, wherein were thousands of noble specimens of oak, beech, elm, and fir—nay, even the fragrant cedar—positively pining for the axe. An enterprising timber merchant had prepared a tender, and only waited for what he considered a decent interval before presenting it. Sir George, however, did nothing of the kind. Contrariwise, on the only open ground near the mansion—a small green knoll—he immediately planted a handsome cluster of quick-growing shrubs and trees.

In a word, lonely as the place already was, Corsellis encircled the entire park with a new and strong palisade. Around the gardens he raised a lofty wall. He purchased, at a great expense, a certain alleged right of way, which, as the public never used it, was disputed by their representatives with tenfold obstinacy. He discouraged any advances on the part of his country neighbors, and rarely set foot beyond his own domain.

"Mad!" pronounced Sir Hugh Quickset, a neighboring squire.

Sir George, who was in the commission, attended the next bench of magistrates. The lunatic took the lead in all the proceedings, decided a matter which involved great legal difficulty, snuffed out the pert clerk who had hitherto guided the decisions of the

Coming home late from a distant market, Jack Bulfinch took it into his head to shorten the road by cutting across the grounds of Mournivale. This was before the erection of the new wall. He had easily scaled the then-existing defences, had passed the mansion, and was about to dive into the plantation, when the great front door swung suddenly open, and out it came, walking tamely beside Sir George himself. Jack, by his own account, had barely time to notice that my Lady Corsellis had immense eyes, like lustral lanterns, which glowed even through a thick protrusive sort of covering that veiled her head and face; likewise, a tail of such prodigious length, that Sir George, with much seeming politeness, carried a portion of it across his arm. This tall went near to discredit Jack's, but for the confirmation the whole story received from the deposition (made rather with than upon oath) of Cephas Pudgebrook, the second gardener, who rolled the terrace on the following day, and observed that it bore distinct traces of a goat or pig, "dribbled regular all along." Mr. Pudgebrook was not a little horrified to learn that he had been actually engaged for two hours (all the while whistling careless secular tunes) in smoothing out the footprints of the enemy of mankind!

Curiosity was at its utmost stretch, when an order was one day received by Timothy Beatle, the purblind clerk, to have new hassocks placed in the Mournivale pews. Hassocks! They were, then, unquestionably coming to church next Sunday. At all events, Sir George and—and the other—would come.

The Reverend Benedict Loanham, of Great Covey, prepared his best discourse. The number of those who attended their religious duties on that day transcended the recollection of the oldest inhabitant. The congregation were already seated, when the Lord of Mournivale, accompanied by two veiled ladies, entered by a private chancel, the party taking their seats in full view of the assembly.

General Sir George Corsellis was, at this time, a man past middle-age, of colossal build, massive head, broad nose, and eyebrows so redundant as almost to emulate little beards. The prevailing expression of this fat from attractive face, was stern even to ferocity; but that it was capable of much softening was apparent even to purblind Timothy Beatle—who, throughout the service, addressed his responses personally to Sir George, adiured him in a stentorian voice to join in the performance of the psalmody, and having, in effect, bestowed upon the astonished gentleman his undivided attention, was, finally, in a position to aver that, whenever he (Corsellis) glanced at one of the veiled creatures at his side, his face changed "from a devil's to an angel's."

The service drew to a conclusion without the veils being for an instant removed. It must be acknowledged that good Mr. Loanham (whose discourse had been directed against the indulgence of idle curiosity and prying into mysteries out of our path) did his very best to advance the secret wishes of his flock, prolonging his address, by the aid of impromptu interpolations, to an extent which, under any other circumstances, would have been considered inordinate.

It was all in vain. Even every sermon must have had Mr. Loanham's— and, with a reluctant blessing, the congregation dispersed. When a reasonable time had been allowed for all undesigning persons to withdraw, the Mournivale party quitted their pew; she, who was presumed to be Lady Corsellis, leaning upon her husband's stalwart arm; the dwarf-like figure of their companion bringing up the rear. Every pretext for lingering about the little churchyard had by this time been exhausted. One individual, alone, stood rooted to the spot—Miss Tiffany. This lady remained, as it were, under a vow.

Miss Tiffany represented the strong-minded element in the circle of Covey-le-Street. To her appeal was wont to be made in all such cases as, under ordinary social circumstances, would have necessitated the interposition of the masculine mind; and, hitherto, Miss Tiffany had been true to her position and herself.

It was alleged of her, and by her, that, in no purpose on which she had really set her heart, had she ever been baffled. In a perhaps unguarded moment, she had pledged herself to see and speak with one or both of the mysterious ladies of Mournivale. She was here to redeem that pledge.

Sending away her maid Marian to a little distance, she herself took up a position half-way between the church and the corner of an avenue of elms which formed a by-path to Mournivale.

As the three figures moved past, she touched the dress of her who walked alone.

"A thousand pardons," said Miss Tiffany. "May I be allowed to sp—?"

The stranger made a sort of impatient bow, and continued her way.

Miss Tiffany, somewhat piqued by this reception, returned to the charge.

"Again I ask your pardon," she said. "I assure you, I am not a beggar. I wish merely to inquire what is Lady Cornelia's pleasure concerning the proposed new sch—?"

The stranger put her hand upon her arm, as if to impose silence, but, with the other, pointed forward in such a manner as to invite Miss Tiffany to accompany her. Thus, maid Marian, watching in the distance, saw the four disappear into the avenue.

Another minute, and her mistress was seen returning; but with a step so strange and uncertain, and a demeanor altogether so unusual, that Marian started off hastily to meet her. To Marian's alarm and surprise, Miss Tiffany took not the slightest notice of her; but reeled on, as it were, in the direction of home, her eyes fixed and staring, her face pale as ashes, her hands working wildly, as though in desperate endeavor to keep off some invisible assailant.

"Horror, horror!" was the only reply her terrified attendant could obtain, in answer to her repeated inquiries.

Arrived at home, Miss Tiffany went straight to her chamber, and, locking the door, remained in strict seclusion until the evening. Then she rang for Marian, and gave her certain directions for the morrow, which raised that young lady's surprise and consternation to their climax.

On the following day, there appeared a notice in

the front garden, describing that desirable cottage-residence to be let, furnished or unfurnished, for an indefinite period, with instant possession.

To the numerous inquirers answer was returned that Miss Tiffany had been summoned to the sick-bed of a relative, who, though near in blood, was somewhat distant in body; being, in fact, resident in Australasia. Consequently, Miss Tiffany must not be expected back immediately.

Miss Tiffany had, in real deed, departed that morning, and all the explanation afforded of this sudden resolution, was contained in the following note, addressed to an intimate friend:

"Good-by, Sophy dear. Love to all friends. *Shea Mournivale.* Beware of curiosity. Seek to know no more.

Your unhappy friend,

"TERESA."

I will not dwell upon the hubbub created by this event in the community of either Covey. My business is with facts, and the next fact in my recollection (putting aside innumerable unsubstantiated rumors concerning the doings of the family at Mournivale), is a visit paid one evening by the steward Harper to my friend Charley Tincture.

Harper, who was naturally a hearty fellow, with a frank, open manner of speech, now looked anxious and careworn, and spoke in a hesitating, perplexed way, which Charley could not understand.

He apologized for calling at that late hour—half-past nine—on the ground that he did not wish his visit known, and presently untying a blue handkerchief which he carried in his hand, placed upon the table something that had very much the appearance of half a cold apple-tart.

"I wish you, sir," he said, "to be kind enough to examine this, and tell me if 'tis good for a Christian's dinner. If 'tis, why there's an end; if not, why then I've got something more to say."

Tincture made him sit down, and retired to his surgery, sending, in pursuance of an idea that occurred to him, for himself, who happened to be passing the evening in the neighborhood. Together we carefully analyzed the viand, and, applying the usual tests, detected the presence of a certain vegetable poison, in sufficient quantity to destroy a dozen human lives.

On hearing this result, Harper turned so white and sick, that Charley had to administer a glass of brandy, after which the worthy steward commenced his tale, with the startling information that the pastry we had had under our consideration, together with numerous other delicacies, similarly seasoned, formed the daily bill of fare at Mournivale.

For a long time past—in fact, ever since the arrival of the family—the steward's attention had been from time to time attracted by a remarkable proceeding on the part of Morgan le Fay. Every dish, whether prepared by her own hands or those of assistants, received a slight addition, sometimes in a liquid, sometimes pulviferous form, the materials being obtained from a sort of cabinet built into the wall, and secured with a small but massive metal door, of which Morgan le Fay always kept the key. This ceremony, though not absolutely performed by stealth, always seemed to be invested with a certain degree of mystery. It was etiquette to notice it as little as possible; but Harper could not help observing that every dish, after undergoing this singular preparation, was regarded with a respect and tenderness almost reverential, was handled with the utmost caution, and, when re-

turned disabled from the dinner-table, was consigned by the high priestess, Morgan le Fay, to a receptacle expressly constructed for the purpose, from whence it never again emerged.

Perpetually haunted by this mystery, Harper at length conceived an irresistible desire to convince himself, by actual experiment, that a strange, horrible fancy, that would sometimes intrude itself into his mind, was erroneous and absurd. One day, by great good fortune, an opportunity occurred of securing a portion of apple-tart that had been almost half consumed in the parlor. Mr. Harper, possessing himself of an unfortunate dog whose condition of skin rendered his abrupt decease a matter of congratulation both to himself and mankind, presented him with a small portion of the pie, on receipt of which the unfortunate animal uttered one broken howl, stretched himself out, and expired. Under the circumstances, Mr. Harper at once secured the remainder of the tart in his handkerchief, and hastened to submit it to medical scrutiny.

The case was curious and difficult. In spite of the uncommon dietary, it was certain that nothing had happened at Mournivale to warrant legal interference. No enactment restricts the indulgence in arsenic, or belladonna, as long as they suit the constitution. It was ultimately agreed to keep the matter quiet, Harper undertaking to report to us, any new incident of an unusual nature that might come under his observation.

CHAPTER IV.

It was not very long before a new phenomenon revealed itself. The summer was well advanced, and had been unusually sultry. The windows of Mournivale, like those of less mysterious mansions, remained open, or at least unshuttered, long after dark. It began to be declared that the sounds and appearances distinguishable through these windows, were not to be accounted for by any rules of ordinary domestic life. Regularly after nightfall—perhaps about ten o'clock (the country people asserted)—the entire upper portion of the vast mansion became suddenly illuminated with a mighty red lustre, such as might proceed from the seething crater of a volcano at the close of an eruption. From thence were heard to issue loud and agonizing shrieks, varied with the notes of some strange instrument of the trumpet kind, now and then a clash of cymbals, and, not infrequently, a low, horrible sound, which could only be described as a lion imitating the laugh of a man.

From midnight until one o'clock, the watchers declared, there usually reigned a profound silence. About the last-named hour, a long, hoarse cry, unlike the voice of man or animal, pealed through the house, and, in a second, the lights in every room were extinguished like one. At that period, the rising ground planted by Corsellis, was not covered with wood of sufficient growth to conceal the upper windows, and the crimson glow proceeding from them was plainly visible from the neighboring village.

Speculation was busy over these strange doings, when a new and important circumstance occurred. Harper, having some business to transact with his master, repaired to the mansion one morning rather before his usual hour. Sir George was out, on horseback. As the steward retraced his steps through the hall, a violent shriek, twice or thrice repeated, struck his ear.

Yielding to the impulse of the moment, and imagining, as he afterwards explained, that some person's clothes had caught fire, he bounded up the hitherto sacred stair, and stood at the door of the first of the suite of apartments inhabited by the family. It was from hence that the shrieks had proceeded. The door was ajar. He pushed it open. All was hushed as death; but, on a rich sofa, lay a slight female figure, with the face turned away. Beside her knelt the diminutive form of the third member of the party—both of them motionless, as though carved in his car.

Yielding to the impulse of the moment, and imagining, as he afterwards explained, that some person's clothes had caught fire, he bounded up the hitherto sacred stair, and stood at the door of the first of the suite of apartments inhabited by the family. It was from hence that the shrieks had proceeded. The door was ajar. He pushed it open. All was hushed as death; but, on a rich sofa, lay a slight female figure, with the face turned away. Beside her knelt the diminutive form of the third member of the party—both of them motionless, as though carved in his car.

Suddenly, without any change in the attitude of the body or limbs, the head of the kneeling figure began to turn. Revolving slowly, as on a pivot, the face came completely round, and fronted Harper, as he stood rooted to the spot. And what a face! Wrought in grey granite, with a hideous carved grin, great, white eyeballs in which no pupils were visible, a huge, mocking mouth, seeming to dart out, like tongues, spicule of lurid flame! Harper—man as he was, and no timid man—thrilled with a nameless fear, made but three steps down stairs, and never stopped till he reached his own domain.

In relating this strange story to us, I observed that nothing seemed to have impressed him so strongly as the stony gleam of the woman's or fiend's eyes. His constant reference to this feature, no doubt, led to the habit we subsequently acquired, of talking of the personage alluded to as "Mournivale Stone-Eyes."

Many were inclined to discredit the whole narrative; but Harper silenced these detractors by giving notice to his employer of his desire to quit his service as soon as arrangements could be made; and, as he had secured no provision for himself, it was only reasonable to believe him actuated by a genuine repugnance to connect himself with the haunted mansion.

The event next in order, I believe, was this:—The Mournivale property "marched," as they say in Scotland, on one side with that of Squire Harlbutt, a country gentleman of considerable wealth, but who mixed little with the county society, and had punctiliously avoided his extraordinary neighbor. He was a magistrate, and had been one of those present on the occasion when Corsellis had so defiantly taken the lead in the proceedings of the bench. He had re-

turned home not a little disgusted at the treatment he and his brethren had experienced.

It happened that Mr. Harlbutt received a visit from his nephew, a captain in the army, who had been for some time in a local command. He had commanded a frontier corps at the Cape, employed in repelling the incursions of the Caffres—a duty requiring both courage and vigilance, and not without a certain smack of adventure greatly to the taste of the young officer. The mysteries of Mournivale were not long in reaching his ears, and Captain Harlbutt at once came to the conclusion that he could not beguile his three weeks' visit at Fairwoods better than by unravelling the same.

It was, I think, on the third or fourth day after his arrival, that a party, organized for the purpose, assembled by different paths after nightfall at a certain spot in the woodland. It consisted of Harlbutt, Charley Tincture, Harper, a trusty keeper of Harlbutt's famous for seeing in the dark, and myself.

There was a bright August moon, but it was occasionally veiled by dense masses of cloud. We pushed our approaches nearer and nearer to the house, on the side not surrounded by gardens, and from which a small side-entrance alone gave access to the grounds. Just within a cedar copse we sat in a circle, like a group of gentlemanly burglars awaiting their opportunity, the red sparks of our cigars alone revealing the whereabouts of each individual.

Harlbutt was in the middle of a Caffre story, when an exclamation from our lookout directed our attention to the mansion. The windows, as usual, from one end to the other, had suddenly become one blaze of lurid splendor. To this succeeded the accustomed shrieks and other sounds; the horrible unearthly laugh, and, what Harper had never noticed on former occasions, a faint, wild wail, like that of a funeral chant, sung by many voices, at a distance so remote as only to be occasionally audible. Prepared as he was for something unusual, Harlbutt was struck dumb with amazement at what he heard and saw.

"An orgy of demons in a country gentleman's house, in the nineteenth century!" he muttered, in a bewildered way.

Remark and conjecture were soon abandoned, and we continued to watch the glowing windows in silence—silence as deep as that which now prevailed in the haunted dwelling. As usual, from twelve o'clock not a sound was heard. But, as the distant village clock struck one, the hoarse, wild cry pealed forth. Out went the lights like a single candle, and all was dark and still. We rose to go.

"Hark!" exclaimed Harlbutt, stopping us. "I hear a knell!"

We listened. A low, muffled sound, like a passing bell, came faintly on our ears.

"The door is opening," said the quick-sighted keeper.

Opening it was. And out issued a curious procession. A bier, or stretcher, covered with a pall, on which lay a corpse in white, was carried by four female figures in mourning dresses. Behind these walked Sir George Corsellis, his head bare, a lady leaning on his arm; last came another woman, whom Harper recognized by the bright moonlight as Morgan le Fay. She led by a chain an animal which, but for its head which was a dog's, would seem to be a lion, having the magnificent mane and tufted tail which characterize the monarch of the forest.

This strange pageant, made still more singular by the intermittent moon-gleams, at first (somewhat to our embarrassment) took the direction of our ambuscade; but, on approaching the covert, it inclined to the right, and passed to the rear of the copse. It was at this time so near, that Harper recognized the body on the bier as that of the fearful being we had been accustomed to speak of as "Mournivale Stone-Eyes." A sudden dash of moonlight fell upon the scene, and revealed the terrible gray face, and stone-white open eyes, as clearly as by day.

It was hastily agreed to thread the copse as quietly as possible, and follow the progress of these strange obsequies. Captain Harlbutt and the keeper, as the most experienced bushmen, led the way. The latter, in a few minutes, reported that the party had entered the copse—at a somewhat open part—in the rear, and might be seen by us without discovery, completing the ceremonial of burial. The grave must have been previously prepared—for scarcely had we taken up our positions, when the body was lifted from the bier, and lowered by means of long white scarfs deep into the earth. This done, there was a pause; when, apparently at a signal from Corsellis, Morgan le Fay approached the edge of the grave—leading the dog lion, from which the others seemed to shrink instinctively. She wound her arms in the beast's shaggy mane, drawing him fearlessly towards her, until his sharp nose and glowing eyes were over her shoulder. As she held him in this attitude, Corsellis made a sudden step forward. There was a gleam of something—a blow—a broken roar—and the animal rolled over and over into the open grave. The latter was then carefully filled and smoothed down, level with the surrounding surface; leaves and sprays were scattered lightly over it; and then Corsellis gave his arm to his lady, and the whole party returned to the mansion—the servants chatting gaily, and apparently only deterred by the stately presence of their master stalking on before, from enjoying a dance by moonlight.

As odd and unnatural had been this whole affair, that we could have easily fancied it a dream. No one present attempted a solution of the mystery. All we could do was to note by measurement the exact spot of this extraordinary interment; after which we re-

turned home, consulting as to the steps that should next be taken.

A meeting was arranged for the following day at Fairwoods, when various opinions were expressed—the prevailing one being to the effect that some deed of violence had been perpetrated, to which it was our obvious duty to invite the attention of the authorities. This point being conceded, who should take the initiative? There was a general disinclination to commence the remarkable dispositions which would have to be made, before any action could be taken having reference to a charge of murder. After much discussion, it was resolved to leave matters as they were, for at least one day; thus affording an opportunity of ascertaining, through Harper, what effect, if any, the removal of Mournivale Stone-Eyes had wrought upon the household.

On the evening of the succeeding day, the steward attended, as had been agreed, at Mr. Tincture's lodgings; Mr. Harlbutt and his nephew, Mr. Fanshawe (a neighboring magistrate), and myself, being also present.

The statement Harper had to make, rendered the mystery still more profound and complex than before. The preceding day had, to all appearance, been one of jubilee at Mournivale. Sir George Corsellis had gone out riding in the forenoon, actually accompanied by his lady, who was mounted on a beautiful Spanish jennet, lately arrived in Sir George's stable. The groom who attended them reported that they had had more than one visit to distant country residences, galloping across the country, laughing like children, and apparently in the very highest glee. Her ladyship was still veiled, but she had spoken to each and all of the domestics in the course of the day, making them some presents, and ordering that they should have a little feast, to celebrate, as she said, the most joyous event in her existence.

Of Mournivale Stone-Eyes not one word was said. It would seem, however, that her terrible mysterious influence was no longer an object of dread. The servants went where they pleased about the mansion.

Harper, himself—in company with Elsa the creole, and two or three of the other domestics, who were ordered to rearrange some furniture in the upper rooms—had visited almost every apartment in the house, without detecting any trace of her occupancy. Stone-Eyes was unquestionably gone! But *whither?*

Before the council broke up, it was settled that Squire Harlbutt and Mr. Fanshawe should, next morning, wait upon the proprietor of Mournivale, and commence operations by referring to the subject of the poisoned tart; the agency of poison being, in Mr. Harlbutt's mind, inseparably associated with the midnight scene we had witnessed.

CHAPTER V.

The countenance of the big Dutch porter exhibited as much surprise as its natural construction permitted, when the two magistrates requested, in tones slightly peremptory, an audience of his master.

After a moment's delay, they were invited to enter, and conducted to a magnificent library, in which sat Sir George, alone. That gentleman received them with frigid politeness, and so manifestly looked for an immediate explanation of their visit, that Mr. Harlbutt at once plunged into the matter. Sir George raised his bushy eyebrows with unfeigned astonishment, but made no remark.

"We are desirous of obtaining from you, if willing to afford it, authority to contradict in your name certain strange rumors afloat in the neighborhood respecting—"

"Well, gentlemen, 'respecting'—?"

"Respecting," resumed Mr. Harlbutt, coolly putting on his spectacles, in order to scan the general's face more minutely, "the disappearance of a member of your household!"

Corsellis gave a slight start. Seated with his back to the light, it was not easy to detect any change of countenance. It was clear, however, he was agitated.

"Allow me to remind you, Sir George," said Mr. Fanshawe, "that we do not wish to press upon you any question you are indisposed to answer; but permit me to ask you, is the use of deadly poison permitted in your family?"

"Poisons, sir!" repeated Corsellis, grasping the arms of his chair, as though about to rise, but only leaning forward. "Explain yourself. Are you aware of what you are saying?"

"Perfectly. You have a domestic in your service, Sir George, called 'Morgan le Fay'."

"The cook. And then?"

"Will you allow me to ask her a single question?"

Corsellis, for reply put his lips to a voice-conductor in the wall.

"Send Morgan here."

A minute of profound silence followed. Then Morgan le Fay appeared at the door, fresh and rosy, curtseying, and smoothing the snow-white apron that rather adorned than concealed her plump and portly form. Sir George pointed to her, looking at his visitors interrogatively.

"We are desirous to ask you one question, my good woman," said Mr. Harlbutt. "My friend and myself are magistrates. Don't agitate yourself, I beg. It is simply this; a poisoned ap—good heavens! She has fainted!"

Morgan le Fay had swooned, and so suddenly that Mr. Fanshawe, who was the nearest, barely caught her as she reached the ground. Sir George rang for assistance. Some of the maids arrived, and the woman recovered.

"I knew it would come. God help us!" gasped the poor creature, as she was borne away.

A gloomy silence followed this scene. It was broken by Sir George himself.

"Well, gentlemen; as I presume the throwing of my cook into a fit was not the whole object of your visit, in what may I satisfy you further?"

"I will tell you, Sir George Corsellis," said old Harlbutt. "It has been openly affirmed, in the neighborhood, that an individual known to have been, ever since your arrival, resident in your household, has suddenly disappeared, under circumstances which warrant suspicion—only suspicion, understand—of poison. When I mentioned this disappearance, a few minutes ago, you started. When I spoke of poison in the presence of your servant, she fainted. And her first words, on recovering, might easily bear a construction most unfavorable to innocence."

He paused. Sir George looked at him for a moment, as though in meditation. Then he replied:

"There is truth in what you say. Gentlemen, I will not conceal from you that I desire to close this interview as speedily as courtesy permits. In what way can I satisfy the extraordinary suspicions to which you have apparently lent yourselves? By-the-way, to which member of my household do they point? To my wife?"

"No, Sir George. To the lady who is supposed not to bear your name."

"Miss Blatchford. Well, gentlemen, be pleased to follow me."

They passed up the wide staircase, and through a portion of the house, until their conductor stopped at a door which, softly opening at his touch, admitted them to a kind of veiled gallery, like an orchestra, from which they could observe, unseen, the interior of one of the rich saloons.

Two young ladies were there; one, engaged in some delicate work that looked like a bride-veil for a fairy; the other, reading aloud.

"Lady Corsellis, Miss Blatchford," said Corsellis, in a subdued tone, pointing to them in the order in which they have been mentioned.

Squire Harlbutt almost started at the beauty he saw before him. Desiree Lady Corsellis (born de Ahna) as a woman almost too fair to live. It seemed impossible that a being so perfect in loveliness, so delicately touched and retouched—as if Nature had for once resolved upon a masterpiece—should be subject to the common needs and ills of poor mortality. A brightness radiated from her, almost pleading indulgence for the ever-recurring fancy that something more than human resided in the shape called Lady Corsellis.

Of Miss Blatchford I will only say that, if fairies are ever dark, she might have been their queen. Small and slender as a child, the perfect symmetry of her proportions, and the easy, finished grace of every movement, proved that she was, in all respects save stature, as near the perfection of womanhood as the most fastidious critic could desire.

Sir George allowed his visitors two minutes to contemplate the lovely picture before them, then once more led the way down stairs. At the door of the library he paused, as though expecting his visitors to take their leave. But a word whispered in Mr. Harlbutt's ear by his colleague, as they came down stairs, had determined the half-satisfied squire to go through with the matter.

"A substitute?" Mr. Fanshawe had suggested, pointing up stairs.

"That there may be no further intrusions on your privacy, Sir George," resumed Mr. Harlbutt, "will you frankly permit Mr. Fanshawe and myself to visit that portion of your premises indicated by the village gossip as the place of burial of—the—the supposed victim?"

The color mounted to Corsellis's brow. He clutched the table against which he was standing, manifestly struggling hard to preserve an unruffled demeanor.

"Believe me, sir, nothing short of this will completely refute the scandal. But you will act as you please," added the old gentleman, as he took up his hat.

Sir George made one turn in the apartment, as if meditating on what course he should adopt; then he replied:

"Be it so, gentlemen. I was as little aware of the interest my proceedings were creating, as of the vigilant watch kept upon me. My unhappy secret is about to be disclosed, and since it is useless to cast any obstacles in the way of that investigation in which your duty, I suppose, alone compels you to persevere, I will myself aid in this discovery."

He rang the bell. It was answered by Troek the porter.

"Send three of the garden people with spades to the rear of the cedar-cope."

Signing to the magistrates to follow, Corsellis passed into the garden, and thence, by a small door into the outer grounds. The gardeners arriving at the same instant, Corsellis led the party directly to the scene of the midnight burial. Pointing to the spot where the fresh-turned soil indicated a grave, he ordered his men to dig.

A hole was quickly made. Fast flew the loose black mould to the surface. Presently one of the laborers held up his hand.

"There is something here," he said.

"Well, man, up with it. Why do you stop?" exclaimed Corsellis, impatiently stamping his foot.

The men carefully uncovered the buried "something," and handed to the surface the carcase of an animal of the canine family, but with a shaggy mane and crest, something resembling those of a lion. Even in death, there was something curiously fierce and repulsive in the aspect of the hybrid beast. It

had been stabbed with some broad, keen blade, absolutely through and through.

"Gentlemen, are you content?" asked Corsellis, pointing at the animal as it lay at his feet. "This dog-lion acknowledged but two masters in the world—myself, and my servant Morgan. He became dangerous. We tried to poison him in vain. I killed him with my Malay creese, and here's his carcase. What more?"

"But, what *below* him, sir?" said old Harlbutt. Corsellis bit his lip. His eye glared upon the speaker with a gleam hardly less ferocious than that of his own dog-lion, when alive; he looked round upon the circle; then, in a fury, burst out:

"Dig, dig, fellows, and have done with it! Cast out, cast out! Quick, now! That's well!"

A spade had rested on something else than mould. The earth was rapidly cleared away, and exposed the folds of a shroud.

"Lift her carefully, fellows," said Corsellis, with a sort of fierce laugh. "Soft, now, soft! Do not expose those delicate limbs. Remember, though dead, she is a woman. Now, all together. There!"

The stiffened frame was laid upon the grass close at hand. Then Sir George, taking the shroud in his two hands, rent it from top to bottom, and threw the pieces apart. It was an artist's lay-figure. On the face appeared a hideous mask, with white, stony eyes, so constructed as to pass round and round; showing the face in any direction, as though the neck were invertebrated.

"There, gentlemen, is the whole secret," said Sir George, "since you will be content with nothing less. And here," he added, in a tone suddenly changed to one of the deepest feeling, "here is the key to the mysteries of Mournevalle. My darling wife was—thank God I may now express it—*mad*. Gentlemen, I was assured by a foreign physician, whose life has been passed in the study of brain disease, that if I would fearlessly and minutely follow the directions he gave me, as adapted to my wife's peculiar case, there was every hope, nay, almost certainty, of ultimate restoration. A portion of his system involved absolute indulgence of the delusion under which she labored. Her delusion was, that she had passed into the custody of a fiend, in whose fiery palace she was condemned to pass two hours nightly, amidst the noise and riot of fearful beings who were invisible to her. For months this hallucination was humored. At length, certain symptoms which were from time to time carefully reported to the professor, induced him to authorize a daring experiment. *We resolved to kill the fiend.* It was done; we not only killed, but the more deeply to impress the supposed occurrence on my poor patient's mind, *buried*, her persecutor with all the pageant that the resources of my establishment could supply, sacrificing at the same time my poor Lion, on whose temper I could no longer depend.

"As touching the poison, Mr. Harlbutt," continued Sir George, "I conclude that my cook's consternation arose from the fear that some apple-tart intended for the destruction of Lion, had been productive of mischief elsewhere—a circumstance I should deeply deplore. At all events, I know that the poisoned dish was missing, and that its disappearance created no small anxiety. When I add that our own viands were occasionally seasoned with homeopathic preparations, I think I have touched upon everything you could desire to know. If not, give me the pleasure of your company on any future day, and I will complete my explanations, as well as make you known to my wife, and her nurse, friend, and cousin in one—our ex-demon—Miss Blatchford."

Sir George and his lady resided here for two years—mixing frequently with society, everywhere popular and welcome guests. When, at the end of that time, Miss Blatchford married Captain—then Colonel—Harlbutt, Sir George and his wife went to Italy, and continued, I believe, to reside there, until the death of both—on the same day—at Florence.

THE CLEVER WOMAN OF THE FAMILY.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE POST BAG.

"Thouft, like ivy on a ruin, make the rifts they seem to shade." — C. G. DUFFY.

August 3, 7 A. M.

"MY DEAR COLONEL KEITH,—Papa is come, and I have got up so early in the morning that I have nothing to do but to write to you before we go in to Avonchester. Papa and Mr. Beauchamp came by the six o'clock train, and Lady Temple sent me in the waggonette to meet them. Aunt Ailie would not go, because she was afraid Aunt Ermine would get anxious whilst she was waiting. I saw papa directly, and yet I did not think it could be papa, because you were not there, and he looked quite past me, and I do not think he would have found me or the carriage at all if Mr. Beauchamp had not known me. And then, I am afraid, I was very naughty, but I could not help crying just a little when I found you had not come; but perhaps Lady Keith may be better, and you may come before I go into court to-day, and then I shall tear up this letter. I am afraid papa thought I was unkind to cry when he was just come home, for he did not talk to me near so much as Mr. Beauchamp did, and his eyes kept looking out as if he did not see anything near, only quite far away. And I suppose Russian coats must be made of some sort of sheep that eats tobacco."

August 3, 10 A. M.

"DEAREST COLIN,—I have just lighted on poor little Rosie's before-breakfast composition, and I can't refrain from sending you her first impressions, poor child, though no doubt they will alter, as she sees more of her father. All are gone to Avonchester now, though with some doubts whether this be indeed the critical day; I hope it may be, the sooner this is over the better; but I am full of hope. I cannot believe but that the Providence that has done so much to discover Edward's innocence to the world, will finish the work! I have little expectation though of your coming down in time to see it; the copy of the telegraphic message, which you sent by Harry, looks as bad as possible, and even allowing something for inexperience and fright, things must be in a state in which you could hardly leave your brother, so unwell as he seems.

2 P.M. I was interrupted by Lady Temple, who was soon followed by Mrs. Curtis, burning to know whether I had any more intelligence than had floated to

them. Pray, if you can say anything to exonerate poor Rachel from mismanagement, say it strongly; her best friends are so engaged in wishing themselves there, and pitying poor Bessie for being in her charge, that I long to confute them, for I fully believe in her sense and spirit in any real emergency that she had not ridden out to encounter.

"And I have written so far without a word on the great subject of all, the joy untold that our hearts had ached for so long, and that we owe entirely to you; for Edward owns that nothing but your personal representations would have brought him, and, as I suppose you already know—he so much hated the whole subject of Madodox's treachery that he had flung aside, unread, all that he saw related to it. Dear Colin, whatever else you have done, you have filled a famished heart. Could you but have seen Ailie's face all last evening as she sat by his side, you would have felt your reward—it was as if the worn, anxious, almost stern mask had been taken away, and our Ailie's face was beaming out as it used when she was the family pet, before Julia took her away to be finished. She sees no change; she is in an ecstasy of glamour that makes her constantly repeat her rejoicings that Edward is so much himself, so unchanged, till I almost feel unsisterly for seeing in him the traces that these sad years have left, and that poor little Rose herself has detected. No, he is not so much changed as exaggerated. The living to himself, and with so cruel a past, has greatly increased the old dreaminess that we always tried to combat, and he seems less able than before to turn his mind into any channel but the one immediately before him. He is most loving when roused, but infinitely more inclined to fall off into a muse. I am afraid you must have had a troublesome charge in him, judging by the uproar Harry makes about the difficulty of getting him safe from Paddington. It is good to see him and Harry together—the old schoolboy ways are so renewed, all bitterness so entirely forgotten, only Harry rages a little that he is not more wrapped up in Rose. To say the truth, so do I; but if it were not for Harry's feeling the same, I should believe that you had taught me to be exacting about my rosebud. Partly, it is that he is disappointed that she is not like her mother; he had made up his mind to another Lucy, and her Williams face took him by surprise, and, partly, he is not a man to adapt himself to a child. She must be trained to help unobtrusively

in his occupations; the unknowing little plaything her mother was, she never can be. I am afraid he will never adapt himself to English life again — his soul seems to be in his mines, and if as you say he is happy and valued there — though it is folly to look forward to the wrench again, instead of rejoicing in the present gladness; but often as I had fashioned that arrival in my fancy, it was never that Harry's voice, not yours, should say the 'Here he is.'

"They all went this morning in the wagonette, and the two boys with Miss Curtis in the carriage. Lady Temple is very kind in coming in and out to enliven me. I am afraid I must close, and send this before their return. What a day it is! And how are you passing it? I fear, even at the best, in much anxiety. Lady Temple asks to put in a line. Yours ever,

"E. W."

"August 3d, 5 p. m.

"MY DEAR COLONEL, — This is just to tell you that dear Ermine is very well, and bearing the excitement and suspense wonderfully. We were all dreadfully shocked to hear about poor dear Bessie; it is so sad her having no mother nor any one but Rachel to take care of her, though Rachel would do her best, I know. If she would like to have me, or if you think I could do any good, pray telegraph for me the instant you get this letter. I would have come this morning, only I thought, perhaps, she had her aunt. That stupid telegraph never said whether her baby was alive, or what it was; I do hope it is all right. I should like to send nurse up at once — I always thought she saved little Cyril when he was so ill. Pray send for nurse or me, or anything I can send: anyway, I know nobody can be such a comfort as you; but the only thing there is to wish about you is, that you could be in two places at once.

"The two boys are gone in to the trial, they were very eager about it; and dear Grace promises to take care of Conrade's throat. Poor boys! they had got up a triumphal arch for your return; but I am afraid I am telling secrets. Dear Ermine is so good and resolutely composed — quite an example. Yours affectionately,

"F. G. TEMPLE."

"AVONCESTER, August 3d, 2 p. m.

"MY DEAR COLONEL KEITH, — I am just come out of court, and I am to wait at the inn, for Aunt Ailie does not like for me to hear the trial, but she says I may write to you to pass away the time. I am sorry

I left my letter out to go this morning, for Aunt Ailie says it is very undutiful to say anything about the sheep's wool in Russia smelling of tobacco. Conrade says it is all smoking, and that every one does it who has seen the world. Papa never stops smoking but when he is with Aunt Ermine; he sat on the box and did it all the way to Avon-ester, and Mr. Beauchamp said it was to compose his mind. After we got to Avon-ester we had a long, long time to wait, and first one was called and then another, and they wanted me last of all. I was not nearly so frightened as I was that time when you sent for me, though there were so many more people; but it was daylight, and the judge looked so kind, and the lawyer spoke so gently to me, and Mr. Maddox did not look horrid like that first time. I think he must be sorry now he has seen how much he has hurt papa. The lawyer asked me all about the noises, and the lions, and the letters of light, just as Mr. Grey did; and they showed me papa's old seal ring, and asked if I knew it, and a seal that was made with the new one that he got when the other was lost; and I knew them because I used to make impressions on my arms with them when I was a little girl. There was another lawyer that asked how old I was, and why I had not told before; and I thought he was going to laugh at me for a silly little girl, but the judge would not let him, and said I was a clear-headed little maiden; and Mr. Beauchamp came with Aunt Ailie, and took me out of court, and told me to choose anything in the whole world he should give me, so I chose the little writing case I am writing with now, and 'The Heroes' besides, so I shall be able to read till the others come back, and we go home. — Your affectionate little friend,

"ROSE ERMINIE WILLIAMS."

"THE HOMESTEAD, August 3, 9 p. m.

"MY DEAR ALEXANDER, — You made me promise to send you the full account of this day's proceedings, or I do not think I should attempt it, when you may be so sadly engaged. Indeed, I should hardly have gone to Avon-ester had the sad intelligence reached me before I had set out, when I thought my sudden return would be a greater alarm to my mother, and I knew dear Fanny would do all she could for her. Still she has had a very nervous day, thinking constantly of your dear sister, and of Rachel's alarm and inexperience; but her unlimited confidence in your care of Rachel is some comfort, and I am hoping that the

alarm may have subsided, and you may be all rejoicing. I have always thought that, with dear Rachel, some new event or sensation would best efface the terrible memories of last spring. My mother is now taking her evening nap, and I am using the time for telling you of the day's doings. I took with me Fanny's two eldest, who were very good and manageable; and we met Mr. Grey, who put us in very good places, and told us the case was just coming on. You will see the report in detail in the paper, so I will only try to give what you would not find there. I should tell you that Maddox has entirely dropped his *alias*. Mr. Grey is convinced that was only a bold stroke to gain time and prevent the committal, so as to be able to escape, and that he 'reckoned upon bullying a dense old country magistrate;' but that he knew it was quite untenable before a body of unexceptionable witnesses. Altogether the man looked greatly altered and crest-fallen, and there was a meanness and vulgarity in his appearance that made me wonder at our ever having credited his account of himself. He had an abject look, very unlike his confident manner at the sessions, nor did he attempt his own defence. Mr. Grey kept on saying he must know that he had not a leg to stand upon.

"The counsel for the prosecution told the whole story, and it was very touching. I had never known the whole before; the sisters are so resolute and uncomplaining: but how they must have suffered when every one thought them ruined by their brother's fraud. I grieve to think how we neglected them, and only noticed them when it suited our convenience. Then he called Mr. Beauchamp, and you will understand better than I can all about the concern in which they were embarked, and Maddox coming to him for an advance of £300, giving him a note from Mr. Williams, asking for it to carry out an invention. The order for the sum was put into Maddox's hands, and the banker proved the paying it to him by an order on a German bank.

"Then came Mr. Williams. I had seen him for a moment in setting out, and was struck with his strange, lost, dreamy look. There is something very haggard and mournful in his countenance; and, though he has naturally the same fine features as his eldest sister, his cheeks are hollow, his eyes almost glassy, and his beard, which is longer than the colonel's, very gray. He gave me the notion of the wreck of a man, stunned and crushed, and never thoroughly alive again; but when he stood in the wit-

ness-box, face to face with the traitor, he was very different; he lifted up his head, his eyes brightened, his voice became clear, and his language terse and concentrated, so that I could believe in his having been the very able man he was described to be. I am sure Maddox must have quailed under his glance, there was something so loftily innocent in it, yet so wistful, as much as to say, 'how could you abuse my perfect confidence?' Mr. Williams denied having received the money, written the letter, or even thought of making the request. They showed him the impression of two seals. He said one was made with a seal-ring given him by Colonel Keith, and lost some time before he went abroad; the other, with one with which he had replaced it, and which he produced, he had always worn it on his finger. They matched exactly with the impressions; and there was a little difference in the hair of the head upon the seal that was evident to every one. It amused the boys extremely to see some of the old jury-men peering at them with their glasses. He was asked where he was on the 7th of September (the date of the letters), and he referred to some notes of his own, which enabled him to state that on the 5th he had come back to Prague from a village with a horrible Bohemian name—all es and zs—which I will not attempt to write, though much depended on the number of the said letters.

"The rest of the examination must have been very distressing, for Maddox's council pushed hard about his reasons for not returning to defend himself, and he was obliged to tell how ill his wife was, and how terrified; and they endeavoured to make that into an admission that he thought himself liable. They tried him with bits of the handwriting, and he could not always tell which were his own;—but I think every one must have been struck with his honorable scrupulosity in explaining every doubt he had.

"Other people were called in about the writing, but Alison Williams was the clearest of all. She was never puzzled by any scrap they showed her, and, moreover, she told of Maddox having sent for her brother's address, and her having copied it from a letter of Mrs. Williams's, which she produced, with the wrong spelling, just as it was in the forgery. The next day had come a letter from the brother, which she showed, saying that they were going to leave the place sooner than they had intended, and spelling it right. She gave the same account of the seals, and nothing ever seemed

to disconcert her. My boys were so much excited about their own 'Miss Williams,' that I was quite afraid they would explode into a cheer.

"That poor woman whom we used to call Mrs. Rawlins told her sad story next. She is much worn and subdued, and Mr. Grey was struck with the change from the fierce excitement she showed when she was first confronted with Maddox after her own trial, but she held fast to the same evidence, giving it not resentfully, but sadly and firmly, as if she felt it to be her duty. She, as you know, explained how Maddox had obtained access to Mr. Williams's private papers, and how she had afterwards found in his possession the seal ring, and the scraps of paper in his patron's writing. A policeman produced them, and the seal perfectly filled the wax upon the forged letter. The bits of paper showed that Maddox had been practising imitating Mr. Williams's writing. It all seemed most distinct, but still there was some sharp cross-examination of her on her own part in the matter, and Mr. Grey said it was well that little Rose could so exactly confirm the facts she mentioned.

"Poor, dear little Rose looked very sweet and innocent, and not so much frightened as at her first examination. She told her story of the savage way in which she had been frightened into silence. Half the people in the court were crying, and I am sure it was a mercy that she was not driven out of her senses, or even murdered that night. It seems that she was sent to bed early, but the wretches knowing that she always woke and talked to her mother at her bed time, the phosphoric letters were prepared to frighten her, and detain her in her room, and then Maddox growled at her when she tried to pass the door. She was asked how she knew the growl to be Maddox's, and she answered that she heard him cough. Rachel will, I am sure, remember the sound of that little dry cough. Nothing could make it clearer than that the woman had spoken the truth. The child identified the two seals with great readiness, and then was sent back to the inn that she might not be perplexed with hearing the defence. This, of course, was very trying to us all, since the best the counsel could do for his client was to try to pick holes in the evidence, and make the most of the general acquiescence in Mr. Williams's guilt for all these years. He brought forward letters that showed that Mr. Williams had been very sanguine about the project, and had written about the possibility that an advance might be needed. Some of the letters, that both Mr. Williams and Alison

owned to be his writing, spoke in most flourishing terms of his plans; and it was proved by documents and witnesses that the affairs were in such a state that bankruptcy was inevitable, so that there was every motive for securing a sum to live upon. It was very miserable all the time this was going on; the whole interpretation of Mr. Williams's conduct seemed to be so cruelly twisted aside, and it was what every one had all along believed, his absence was made so much of, and all these little circumstances that had seemed so important were held so cheap—one knew it was only the counsel's representation, and yet Alison grew whiter and whiter under it. I wish you could have heard the reply: drawing the picture of the student's absorption and generous confidence, and his agent's treachery, creeping into his household, and brutally playing on the terrors of his child.

"Well, I cannot tell you all, but the judge summed up strongly for a conviction, though he said a good deal about culpable negligence almost inviting fraud, and I fear it must be very distressing to the Williamses; but the end was that Maddox was found guilty, and sentenced to fourteen years' penal servitude, though I am afraid they will not follow Conrade's suggestion, and chain up a lion by his bed every night of his life.

"We were very happy when we met at the inn, and all shook hands. Dr. Long was, I think, the best at ease. He had come in case this indictment had in any way failed, to bring his own matter forward, so that Maddox should not get off. I do not like him very much, he seemed unable to be really hearty, and I think he must have once been harsh and now ashamed of it. Then he was displeased at Colonel Keith's absence, and could hardly conceal how much he was put out by the cause, as if he thought the Colonel had imposed himself on the family as next heir. I hardly know how to send all this in the present state of things, but I believe you will wish to have it, and will judge how much Rachel will bear to hear. Good night.

Your affectionate Sister,

"GRACE CURTIS."

"GOWANBRAE, AVONMOUTH, }
August 3d, 11 P.M. }

"DEAR KEITH,—Before this day has ended you must have a few lines from the man whom your exertions have relieved from a stigma, the full misery of which I only know by the comfort of its removal. I told you there was much that could never be restored. I feel this all the more in the

presence of all that now remains to me, but I did not know how much could still be given back. The oppression of the load of suspicion under which I labored now seems to me to have been intolerable since I have been freed from it. I cannot describe how changed a man I have felt, since Beauchamp shook hands with me. The full blackness of Maddox's treachery I had not known, far less his cruelty to my child. Had I been aware of all I could not have refrained from trying to bring him to justice; but there is no need to enter into the past. It is enough that I owe to you a freed spirit, and new life, and that my gratitude is not lessened by the knowledge that something besides friendship urged you. Ermine is indeed as attractive as ever, and has improved in health far more than I durst expect. I suppose it is your all-powerful influence. You are first with all here, as you well deserve; even my child, who is as lovely and intelligent as you told me, has every thought pervaded with 'the colonel.' She is a sweet creature; but there was one who will never be retraced, and forgive me, Keith, without her, even triumph must be bitterness. Still ever most gratefully yours,

"EDWARD WILLIAMS."

"August 3d, 11 P.M.

"DEAREST COLIN,—The one sound in my ears, the one song of my heart is, 'Let them give thanks.' It is as if we had passed from a dungeon into sunshine. I suppose it would be too much if you were here to share it. They sent Rose in first to tell me, but I knew in the sound of their wheels that all was well. What an evening we have had; but I must not write more. Ailie is watching me like a dragon, and will not rest till I am in bed; but I can't tell how to lose one minute of gladness in sleep. Oh, Colin, Colin, truest of all true knights, what an achievement yours has been!"

"August 4th.

"That was a crazy bit that I wrote last night, but I will not make away with it. I don't care how crazy you think me. It would have been a pity not to have slept to wake to the knowledge that it was not a dream, but then came the contrast with the sorrow you are watching. And I have just had your letter. What a sudden close to that joyous life! She was one of the sweetest creatures, as you truly say, that ever flashed across one's course; and if she had faults, they were those of her day and her training. I suppose by what you say that she was too girlish to be all the companion your brother required, and that this may ac-

count for his being more shocked than sorrow-stricken; and his child, since he can dwell on the thought, is such a new beginning of hope, that I wonder less than you do at his bearing up so well. Besides, pain dulls the feelings, and is a great occupation. I wish you could have seen that dear Bessie, but I gather that the end came on much more rapidly than had been expected. It seemed as if she were one of those to whom even suffering was strangely lightened and shortened, as if she had met only the flowers of life, and even the thorns and stings were almost lost in their bright blossoms. And she could hardly have lived on without much either of temptation or sorrow. I am glad of your testimony to Rachel's effectiveness, I wrote it out and sent it up to the Homestead. There was a note this morning requesting Edward to come in to see Maddox, and Ailie is gone with him, thinking she may get leave to see poor Maria. Think of writing Edward and Ailie again! Dr. Long and Harry are gone with them. The broken thread is better pieced by Harry than by the Doctor; but he wants Ailie and me to go and stay at Belfast. Now I must hear Rose read, in order to bring both her and myself to our reasonable senses."

"5 P.M.

"They have been returned about an hour, and I must try to give you Edward's account of his interview. Maddox has quite dropped his mask, and seems to have been really touched by being brought into contact with Edward again, and, now it is all up with him, seemed to take a kind of pleasure in explaining the whole web, almost, Edward said, with vanity at his own ingenuity. It was as he used to represent himself to Edward. He was a respectable ironmonger's son, with a taste for art; he was not allowed to indulge it, and then came rebellion, and breaking away from home. He studied at the Academy for a few years, but wanted application, and fancied he had begun too late, tried many things and spent a shifty life, but never was consciously dishonest till after he had fallen in with Edward; and the large sums left uninquired for in his hands became a temptation to one already inclined to gambling. His own difficulties drove him on, and before he ventured on the grand stroke, he had been in a course of using the sums in his hands for his own purposes. The finding poor Maria open to the admiration he gave her beauty, put it into his head to make a tool of her; and this was not the first time he had used Edward's seal, or imitated his writing. No wonder there was

such a confusion in the accounts as told so much against Edward. He told the particulars, Edward says, with the strangest mixture of remorse and exultation. At last, came the journey to Bohemia, and his frauds became the more easy, until he saw there must be a bankruptcy, and made the last bold stroke, investing the money abroad in his own name, so that he would have been ready to escape if Edward had come home again. He never expected but that Edward would have returned, and finding the affairs hopeless, did this deed in order to have a resource. As to regret, he seemed to feel some when he said the effects had gone farther than he anticipated; but 'I could not let him get into that subject,' Edward said, and he soon came back to his amused complacency in his complete hoodwinking of all concerned at home, almost thanking Edward for the facilities his absence had given him. After this, he went abroad, taking Maria, lest she should betray him on being cast off; and they lived in such style at German gambling places that destitution brought them back again to England, where he could better play the lecturer, and the artist in search of subscriptions. Edward could not help smiling over some of his good stories, rather as 'the lord may have commended the wisdom of his unjust steward.' Well, here he came, and, as he said, he really could hardly have helped himself; he had only to stand still and let poor Rachel deceive herself, and the whole concern was in a manner thrust upon him. He was always expecting to be able to get the main sum into his hands, as he obtained more confidence from Rachel, and the wood-cuts were an over-bold stroke for the purpose; he had not intended her to keep or show them, but her ready credulity tempted him too far; and I cannot help laughing now at poor Edward's reproofs to us for having been all so easily cheated, now that he has been admitted behind the scenes. Maddox never suspected our neighborhood; he had imagined us still in London, and though he heard Alison's name, he did not connect it with us. After all, what you thought would have been fatal to your hopes of tracing him, was really what gave him into our hands—Lady Temple's sudden descent upon their F. U. E. E. If he had not been so hurried and distressed as to be forced to leave Maria and the poor child to their fate, Maria would have held by him to the last, and without her testimony where should we have been! But with a summons out against him, and hearing that Maria had been recognized, he could only fly to the place at Bristol that he

thought unknown to Maria. Even when seized by the police, he did not know it was she who directed them, and had not expected her evidence till he actually saw and heard her on the night of the sessions. It was all Colonel Keith's doing, he said; every other adversary he would have despised, but your array of forces met him at every corner where he hoped to escape, and the dear little Rosie gave him checkmate, like a gallant little knight's pawn as she is. 'Who could have guessed that child would have such a confounded memory?' he said, for Edward had listened with a sort of interest that had made him quite forget that he was Rose's father, and that this wicked cunning Colonel was working in his cause. So off he goes to penal servitude, and Edward is so impressed and touched with his sharpness as to predict that he will be the model prisoner before long, if he do not make his escape. As to poor Maria, that was a much more sad meeting, though perhaps less really melancholy, for there can be no doubt that she repents entirely; she speaks of every one as being very good to her, and indeed the old influences only needed revival, they had never quite died out. Even that poor child's name was given for love of Ailie, and the perception of having been used to bring about her master's ruin had always preyed upon her, and further embittered the temper. The barbarity seemed like a dream in connection with her, but, as she told Ailie, when she once began something came over her, and she could not help striking harder. It reminded me of horrible stories of the Hathertons' usage of animals. Enough of this. I believe the sisterhood will find a safe shelter for her when her imprisonment is over, and that temptation will not again be put in her way. We should never have trusted her in poor dear Lucy's household. Rose calls for the letters. Good bye, dearest Colin and conqueror. I know all this will cheer you, for it is your own doing. I can't stop saying so, it is such a pleasant sound. Your own,

"E. W.—."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

VANITY OF VANITIES.

"A life of self-renouncing love
Is a life of liberty."

A. L. WARING.

THE funeral was very quiet. By Colonel Keith's considerate arrangement the attendants met at Timber End, so that the stillness of the Parsonage was not invaded; a measure the more expedient as Alick was

suffering from a return of his old enemy, intermitting fever, and only was able to leave his room in time to join the procession.

Many were present, for poor Bessie had been a general favourite, and her untimely fate had stirred up feelings that had created her into a saint upon earth; but there was no one whose token of respect she would have more esteemed than Colonel Hammond's, who in all the bustle of the remove to Edinburgh had found time to come to Bishopsworthy to do honour to the daughter of his old commanding officer. A flush of gratitude came over Alick's pale face when he became aware of his colonel's presence, and when the choristers' hymn had pealed low and sweetly over the tranquil meadows, and the mourners had turned away, Alick paused at the Parsonage gate to hold out his hand, and bring in this one guest to hear how near to Bessie's heart the father's Highland regiment had been in all the wanderings of her last moments.

The visit was prolonged for nearly an hour, while recollections of Alick's parents were talked over, and Rachel thought him more cheered and gratified than by any other tribute that had been paid to his sister. He was promised an extension of leave; if it were required on account of Lord Keith's state, though under protest that he would have the aguish fever as long as he remained overlooking the water meadows, and did not put himself under Dr. M'Vicar. Through these meadows Colonel Hammond meant to walk back to the station, and Alick and Rachel conducted him far enough to put him into the right path, and in going back again, they could not but go towards the stile leading to that corner of the churchyard where the sexton had finished his work, and smoothed the sods over that new grave.

Some one was standing at the foot—not the sexton—but a young man bending as with an intolerable load of grief. Rachel saw him first, when Alick was helping her down the step, and her start of dismay made him turn and look round. His brow contracted, and she clutched his arm with an involuntary cry of, "Oh, don't," but he, with a gesture that at once awed and tranquillized her, unclasped her hold and put her back, while he stepped forward.

She could hear every word, though his voice was low and deep with emotion. "Carleton, if I have ever been harsh or unjust in my dealings towards you, I am sorry for it. We have both had the sad-

dest of all lessons. May we both take it as we ought."

He wrung the surprised and unwilling hand, and before the youth, startled and overcome, had recovered enough to attempt a reply, he had come back to Rachel, resumed her arm, and crossed the churchyard, still shivering and trembling with the agitation and the force he had put on himself. Rachel neither could nor durst speak; she only squeezed his hand, and when he had shut himself up in his own room, she could not help repairing to his uncle, and telling him the whole. Mr. Clare's "God bless you, my boy," had double meaning in it that night.

Not long after, Alick told Rachel of his having met poor young Carleton in the meadows, pretending to occupy himself with his fishing-rod, but too wretched to do anything. And in a short time Mrs. Carleton again called to pour out to Mrs. Keith her warm thanks to the Captain for having roused her son from his moody, unmanageable despair, and made him consent to accept a situation in a new field of labour, in a spirit of manful duty that he had never evinced before.

This was a grave and subdued, but not wholly mournful period, at Bishopsworthy—a time very precious to Rachel in the retrospect—though there was much to render it anxious. Alick continued to suffer from recurrences of the fever, not very severe in themselves after the first two or three, but laying him prostrate with shivering and headache every third day, and telling heavily on his strength and looks when he called himself well. On these good days he was always at Timber End, where his services were much needed. Lord Keith liked and esteemed him as a sensible, prudent young man, and his qualities as a first-rate nurse were of great assistance to the Colonel. Lord Keith's illness was tedious and painful; the necessity of a dangerous operation became increasingly manifest, but the progress towards such a crisis was slow and the pain and discomfort great; the patient never moved beyond his dressing-room, and needed incessant attention to support his spirits and assist his endeavours to occupy himself. It was impossible to leave him for long together, and Colonel Keith was never set at liberty for exercise or rest except when Alick came to his assistance, and fortunately this young brother-in-law was an especial favourite, partly from Lord Keith's esteem for his prudence, partly from his experience in this especial species of suffer-

ing. At any rate the days of Alick's enforced absence were always times of greater restlessness and uneasiness at Timber End.

Meantime Rachel was constantly thrown with Mr. Clare, supplying Alick's place to him, and living in a round of duties that suited her well, details of parish work, walking with, writing for, and reading to Mr. Clare, and reaping much benefit from intercourse with such a mind. Many of her errors had chiefly arisen from the want of some one whose superiority she could feel, and her old presumptions withered up to nothing when she measured her own powers with those of a highly educated man, while all the time he gave her thanks and credit for all she had effected, but such as taught her humility by very force of infection.

Working in earnest at his visitation sermon, she was drawn up into the real principles and bearings of the controversy, and Mr. Clare failed not to give full time and patience to pick out all her difficulties, removing scruples at troubling him, by declaring that it was good for his own purpose to unwind every tangle even if he did not use every thread. It was wonderful how many of her puzzles were absolutely intangible, not even tangled threads, but a sort of nebulous matter that dispersed itself on investigation. And after all, unwilling as she would have been to own it, a woman's tone of thought is commonly moulded by the masculine intellect, which under one form or another, becomes the master of her soul. Those opinions, once made her own, may be acted and improved upon, often carried to lengths never thought of by their inspirer, or held with noble constancy and perseverance even when he himself may have fallen from them, but from some living medium they are almost always adopted, and thus, happily for herself, a woman's efforts at scepticism are but blind faith in her chosen leader, or, at the utmost, in the spirit of the age. And Rachel having been more than usually removed from the immediate influence of superior men, had been affected by the more feeble and distant power, a leading that appeared to her the light of her independent mind; but it was not in the nature of things that, from her husband and his uncle, her character should not receive that tincture for which it had so long waited, strong and thorough in proportion to its nature, not rapid in receiving impressions, but steadfast and uncompromising in retaining and working on them when once accepted—a

nature that Alick Keith had discerned and valued amid its worst errors far more than mere attractiveness, of which his sister had perhaps made him weary and distrustful. Nor, indeed, under the force of the present influences, was attractiveness wanting, and she suited Alick's peculiarities far better than many a more charming person would have done, and his uncle, knowing her only by her clear mellow voice, her consideration, helpfulness, and desire to think and do rightly, never understood the doubtful amazement now and then expressed in talking of Alick's choice. One great bond between Rachel and Mr. Clare was affection for the little babe, who continued to be Rachel's special charge, and was a great deal dearer to her already than all the seven Temples put together. She studied all the books on infant management that she could obtain, constantly listened for his voice, and filled her letters to her mother with questions and details on his health, and descriptions of his small person. Alick was amused whenever he glanced at his strong-minded woman's correspondence, and now and then used to divert himself with rousing her into emphatic declarations of her preference of this delicate little being to "great, stout, coarse creatures that people call fine children." In fact, Alick's sensitive tenderness towards his sister's motherless child took the form of avoiding the sight of it, and being ironical when it was discussed; but with Mr. Clare, Rachel was sure of sympathy, ever since the afternoon when he had said how the sounds upstairs reminded him of his own little daughter; and sitting under the yew tree, he had told Rachel all the long stored-up memories of the little life that had been closed a few days after he had first heard himself called papa by the baby lips. He had described all these events calmly, and not without smiles, and had said how his own blindness had made him feel thankful that he had safely laid his little Una on her mother's bosom under the church's shade; but when Rachel spoke of this conversation to her husband, she learnt that it was the first time that he had ever talked of those buried hopes. He had often spoken of his wife, but though always fond of children, few who had not read little Una's name beneath her mother's cross, knew that he was a childless father. And yet it was beautiful to see the pleasure he took in the touch of Bessie's infant, and how skilfully and tenderly he would hold it, so that Rachel in full faith averred that the little Alexander was never so happy as with him. The

chief alarms came from Mrs. Comyn Menteith, who used to descend on the Rectory like a whirlwind, when the Colonel had politely expelled her from her father's room at Timber End. Possessed with the idea of Rachel's being very dull at Bishopsworth, she sedulously enlivened her with melancholy prognostics as to the life, limbs, and senses of the young heir, who would never live, poor little darling, even with the utmost care of herself and her nurse, and it was very perverse of papa and the doctors still to keep him from her — poor little darling — not that it mattered, for he was certain not to thrive, wherever he was, and the Gowanbrae family would end with uncle Colin and the glass-blower's daughter; a disaster on which she met with such condolence from Alick (N. B. the next heir) that Rachel was once reduced to the depths of genuine despair by the conviction that his opinion of his nephew's life was equally desponding; and another time was very angry with him for not defending Ermine's gentility. She had not entirely learnt what Alick's assent might mean.

Once, when Mrs Menteith had been besetting her father with entreaties for the keys of Lady Keith's private possessions, she was decisively silenced, and the next day, these same keys were given to Alick, with a request that his wife would as soon as possible look over and take to herself all that had belonged to his sister, except a few heirloom jewels that must return to Scotland. Alick demurred greatly, but the old man would not brook contradiction, and Rachel was very unwillingly despatched upon the mission on one of Alick's days of prostration at home. His absence was the most consoling part of this sad day's work. Any way it could not be otherwise than piteous to dismantle what had been lately so bright and luxurious, and the contrast of the present state of things with that in which these dainty new wedding presents had been brought together, could not but give many a pang; but beside this, there was a more than ordinary impression of "vanity of vanities, all is vanity," very painful to affection that was striving to lose the conviction that it had been a self-indulgent, plausible life. The accumulation of expensive trinkets and small luxuries was as surprising as perplexing to a person of Rachel's severely simple and practical tastes. It was not only since the marriage; for Bessie had always had at her disposal means rather ample, and had used them not exactly foolishly, but evidently for her own gratification. Everything had some intrinsic worth, and was tasteful

or useful, but the multitude was perfectly amazing, and the constant echo in Rachel's ears was, "he heappeth up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them." Lord Keith could hardly have found an executrix for his poor young wife, to whom her properties would have done so little harm. Rachel set many aside for the cousins, and for Mrs. Menteith; others she tried to persuade the Colonel to call Gowanbrae belongings, and failing in this, she hoped through Grace, to smuggle some of them into his Gowanbrae; but when all was done, there was a mass of things that Lord Keith never wished to see again, and that seemed to Rachel to consist of more ornaments than she could ever wear, and more knick-knacks than a captain's wife could ever carry about with her.

She was putting aside the various packets of letters and papers to be looked over more at leisure, when the Colonel knocked at the morning-room door, and told her that his brother would like to see her; when her work was done. "But first," he said, "I must ask you to be kind enough to look over some of these papers, and try to find receipts for some of these bills."

"Here they are," said Rachel; "I was going to look them over at home."

"If you have time to examine them here with me," said Colonel Keith, gently, "I think it may save Alick some pain and vexation."

Rachel was entirely unaware of his meaning, and supposed he only thought of the mere thrilling of the recent wound, but when he sat down and took a long account out of a tradesman's envelope, a chill of dismay came over her, followed by a glow of hope as she recollects a possible explanation: "Have these wretched tradesmen been sending in bills over again at such a time as this?" she exclaimed.

"I should be very glad to find their receipts," returned the Colonel.

They opened the most business-like looking bundles, all of them, though neatly kept, really in hopeless confusion. In vain was the search, and notes came forth which rendered it but too plain that there had been a considerable amount of debt even before the marriage, and that she had made partial payments and promises of clearing all off gradually, but that her new expenses were still growing upon her, and the few payments "on account," since she had been Lady Keith, by no means tallied with the amount of new purchases and orders. No one had suspected her money matters of being in disorder, and Rachel was very slow to comprehend; her simple, country life had

made her utterly unaware of the difficulties and ways and means of a young lady of fashion. Even the direct evidence before her eyes would not at first persuade her that it was not "all those wicked tradesmen;" she had always heard that fashionable shops were not to be trusted.

"I am afraid," said Colonel Keith, "that the whole can scarcely be shifted on the tradesmen. I fear poor Bessie was scarcely free from blame in this matter."

"Not paying! Going on in debt! Oh she could not have meant it!" said Rachel, still too much astonished to understand. "Of course one hears of gay, thoughtless people doing such things, but Bessie—who had so much thought and sense. It must be a mistake! Can't you go and speak to the people?"

"It is very sad and painful to make such discoveries," said Colonel Keith; "but I am afraid such things are not uncommon in the set she was too much thrown amongst."

"But she knew so well—she was so superior; and with Alick and her uncle to keep her above them," said Rachel; "I cannot think she could have done such things."

"I could not *think*, but I see it was so," said Colonel Keith, gravely. "As I am obliged to understand these things, she must have greatly exceeded her means, and have used much cleverness and ingenuity in keeping the tradesmen quiet, and preventing all from coming to light."

"How miserable! I can't fancy living in such a predicament."

"I am much afraid," added the Colonel, looking over the papers, "that it explains the marriage—and then Keith did not allow her as much as she expected."

"Oh Colonel Keith, don't!" cried Rachel; "it is just the one thing where I could not bear to believe Alick. She was so dear and beautiful, and spoke so rightly."

"To believe Alick!" repeated the Colonel, as Rachel's voice broke down.

"I thought—I ought not to have thought—he was hard upon her,—but he knew better," said Rachel; "of course he did not know of all this dreadful business!"

"Assuredly not," said the Colonel, "that is self-evident; but as you say, I am afraid he did know his poor sister's character better than we did, when he came to warn me against the marriage."

"Did he! Oh how much it must have cost him!"

"I am afraid I did not make it cost him less. I thought he judged her harshly, and that his illness had made him magnify trifles, but though our interference would have

been perfectly useless, he was quite right in his warning. Now that, poor thing, she is no longer here to enchant us with her witcheries, I see that my brother greatly suffered from being kept away from home, and detained in this place, and that she left him far more alone than she ought to have done."

"Yes, Alick thought so, but she had such good reasons; I am sure she believed them herself."

"If she had not believed them, she could not have had such perfect sincerity of manner," said the Colonel; "she must have persuaded at least one half of herself that she was acting for every one's good but her own."

"And Mr. Clare, whom Alick always thought she neglected, never felt it. Alick says he was too unselfish to claim attention."

"I never doubted her for one moment till I came home, on that unhappy day, and found how ill Keith was. I did think then that considering how much she had seen of Alick while the splinters were working out, she ought to have known better than to talk of sciatica; but she made me quite believe in her extreme anxiety, and that she was only going out because it was necessary for her to take care of you on your first appearance. How bright she looked, and how little I thought I should never see her again!"

"Oh, she meant what she said! She always was kind to me! Most kind!" repeated Rachel; "so considerate about all the dreadful spring—not one word did she say to vex me about the past! I am sure she did go out on that day as much to shelter me as for anything else. I can't bear to think all this—here in this pretty room that she had such pleasure in; where she made me so welcome, after all my disagreement and foolishness."

The Colonel could almost have said, "Better such foolishness than such wisdom, such repulsion than such attraction." He was much struck by Rachel's distress, and the absence of all female spite and triumph made him understand Ermine's defence of her as really large-minded and generous.

"It is a very sad moment to be undeceived," he said; "one would rather have one's faults come to light in one's life than afterwards."

They were simple words, so simple that the terrible truth with which they were connected, did not come upon Rachel at the first moment, but as if to veil her agitation, she drew towards her a book, an ivory-bound Prayer-book, full of illuminations, of

Bessie's own doing, and her eye fell upon the awful verse, "So long as thou doest well unto thyself, men will speak good of thee." It was almost more than Rachel could bear, sitting in the midst of the hoards, for which poor Bessie had sold herself. She rose up, with a sob of oppressive grief, and broke out, "Oh! at least it is a comfort that Alick was really the kindest and rightest! Only too right! But you can settle all this without him," she added imploringly; "need he know of this? I can't bear that he should."

"Nor I," said Colonel Keith, "it was the reason that I am glad you are here alone."

"Oh, thank you! No one need ever know," added Rachel.

"I fear my brother must see the accounts, as they have to be paid, but that need not be immediately."

"Is there anything else that is dreadful?" said Rachel, looking at the remaining papers, as if they were a nest of adders. "I don't like to take them home now, if they will grieve Alick."

"You need not be afraid of that packet," said the Colonel; "I see his father's handwriting. They look like his letters from India."

Rachel looked into one or two, and her face lighted up. "Oh!" she exclaimed, "this is enough to make up for all. This is his letter to tell about Alick's wound. Oh how beautifully he speaks of him," and Rachel, with no voice to read, handed the thin paper to her companion, that he might see the full commendation, that had been wrung from the reserved father's heart by his son's extremity.

"You must be prepared to hear that all is over," wrote the father to his daughter; "in fact, I doubt whether he can live till morning, though M'Vicar declares that nothing vital has been touched. Be it as it may, the boy has been in all respects even more than I dared to wish, and the comfort he has been ever since he came out to me has been unspeakable. We must not grudge him such a soldier's death after his joyous life. But for you, my poor girl, I could only wish the same for myself to-morrow. You will, at least, if you lose a brother's care, have a memory of him, to which to live up. The thought of such a dead brother will be more to you than many a living one can ever be to a sister."

Rachel's heart beat high, and her eyes were full of tears of exultation. And the Colonel was well pleased to compensate for all the pain he had inflicted by giving her all the details he could recollect of her husband's short campaign. They had be-

come excellent friends over their mournful work, and were sorry to have their *tête-à-tête* interrupted when a message was brought that his Lordship was ready, if Mrs. Keith would be so good as to come into his sitting-room.

She wiped away the tears, and, awe-struck and grave, followed the Colonel; a great contrast to Lord Keith's more frequent lady visitor, as she silently received the polished greeting, its peculiar stateliness of courtesy, enhanced by the feeble state of the shattered old man, unable to rise from his pillowled chair, and his face deeply lined by suffering. He would not let her give him any account of her labours, nor refer any question to him; he only entreated that everything might be taken away, and that he might hear nothing about it. He spoke warmly of Alick's kindness and attention, and showed much solicitude about his indisposition, and at last he inquired for Rachel's "little charge," hoping he was not clamorous or obnoxious to her, or to Mr. Clare's household. Her eager description of his charms provoked a look of interest and a sad smile, followed by a request that, weather and doctor permitting, she would bring the child to be seen for a few minutes. The next day there was an appointment, at which both the Colonel and Alick were wanted, but on the following one, the carriage should be sent to bring her and the little one to Timber End.

The effect of this invitation amused Alick. The first thing he heard in the morning was a decided announcement from Rachel that she must go up to London to procure equipments for the baby to be presented in!

"You know I can't go with you to-day."

"Of course, but I must make him fit to be seen. You know he has been wearing little Una's things all this time, and that will not do out of the nursery."

"A superior woman ought to know that his Lordship will never find out what his son has on."

"Then it is all the more reason that I should not let the poor dear little fellow go about wrapped up in somebody's old shawl!"

"What will you do then — take your maid?"

"Certainly not. I can't have him left."

"Then take him with you?"

"What, Alick, a little unvaccinated baby! Where have you ever lived? I don't see the least reason why I should not go alone."

"You need not begin beating about the world yet, Rachel. How many times did you say you had been in London?"

"Three; once with my father when I was a child, once in the time of the Great Exhibition, and passing through it now with you. But any one of common sense can manage."

"If you will wait till five o'clock I will come with you," said Alick, wearily.

"No, indeed, I had rather not go, than that you should; you are quite tired out enough at the end of the day."

"Then do not go."

"Alick, why will you have no proper feeling for that poor dear child?" said Rachel, with tears in her eyes.

If he winceed he did not show it. "My proper feeling takes the direction of my wife," he said.

"You don't really mean to forbid me to go," she exclaimed.

"I don't *mean* it, for I do so, unless you find some one to go with you."

It was the first real collision that had taken place, but Alick's quiet, almost languid tone had an absolute determination in it from the very absence of argument; and Rachel, though extremely annoyed, felt the uselessness of battling the point. She paused for a few moments, then said with an effort, "May I take the housekeeper?"

"Yes, certainly," and then he added some advice about taking a brougham, and thus lighted her heart; so that she presently said humbly,—

"Have I been self-willed and overbearing, Alick?"

He laughed. "Not at all; you have persevered just where you ought. I dare say this is all more essential than shows on the surface. And," he added, with a shaken voice, "if you were not myself, Rachel, you know how I should thank you for caring for my poor Bessie's child." He was gone almost as he spoke the words, but Rachel still felt the kiss and the hot tears that had fallen on her face.

Mr. Clare readily consented to spare his housekeeper, but the housekeeper was untoward, she was "busied in her housewife skep," and would not stir. Alick was gone to Timber End, and Rachel was just talking of getting the schoolmaster's wife as an escort, when Mr. Clare said,—

"Pray are you above accepting my services?"

"You! Oh, Uncle; thank you, but" —

"What were your orders? Anybody with you, was it not? I flatter myself that I have some *body*, at least."

"If Alick will not think I ought not!"

"The boy will not presume to object to what I do with you."

"I do wish it very much," said candid Rachel.

"Of course you do, my dear. Alick is not cured of a young man's notion that babies are a sort of puppies. He is quite right not to let you run about London by yourself, but he will be quite satisfied if you find eyes and I find discretion."

"But is it not very troublesome to you?"

"It is a capital lark!" said Mr. Clare, with a zest that only the slang word could imply, removing all Rachel's scruples; and in effect Mr. Clare did enjoy the spice of adventure in a most amusing way. He knew perfectly well how to manage, laid out the plan of operations, gave orders to the driver, went into all the shops, and was an effective assistant in the choice of material and even of embroidery. His touch and ear seemed to do more for him than many men's eyes do for them; he heard odd scraps of conversation and retailed them with so much character; he had such pleasant colloquies with all in whose way he fell, and so thoroughly enjoyed the flow and babble of the full spring of life, that Rachel marvelled that the seclusion of his parsonage was bearable to him. He took her to lunch with an old friend, a lady who had devoted herself to the care of poor girls to be trained as servants, and Rachel had the first real sight of one of the many great and good works set on foot by personal and direct labour.

"If I had been sensible, I might have come to something like this!" she said.

"Do you wish to undo these last three months?"

"No; I am not fit to be anything but an ordinary married woman, with an Alick to take care of me; but I am glad some people can be what I meant to be."

"And you need not regret not being useful *now*," said Mr. Clare. "Where should any of us be without you?"

It had not occurred to Rachel, but she was certainly of far more positive use in the world at the present moment than ever she had been in her most assuming maiden days.

Little Alexander was arrayed in all that could enhance his baby dignity, and Rachel was more than ever resolved to assert his superiority over "great frightful fine children," resenting still more vehemently an innocent observation from Alick, that the small features and white skin promised sandiness of hair. Perhaps Alick delighted in saying such things for the sake of proving the very womanhood of his clever woman.

Rachel hung back, afraid of the presentation, and would have sent her maid into the room with the child if Colonel Keith had not taken her in himself. Even yet she was not dexterous in handling the baby; her hands were both occupied, and her attention absorbed, and she could not speak, she felt it so mournful to show this frail motherless creature to a father far more like its grandfather, and already almost on the verge of the grave. She came up to Lord Keith, and held the child to him in silence. He said, "Thank you," and kissed not only the little one, but her own brow, and she kept the tears back with difficulty.

Colonel Keith gave her a chair and foot stool, and she sat with the baby on her lap, while very few words were spoken. It was the Colonel who asked her to take off the hood that hid the head and brow, and who chiefly hazarded opinions as to likeness and colour of eyes. Lord Keith looked earnestly and sadly, but hardly made any observation, except that it looked healthier than he had been led to expect. He was sure it owed much to Mrs. Keith's great care and kindness.

Rachel feared he would not be able to part with his little son, and began to mention the arrangements she had contemplated in case he wished to keep the child at Timber End. On this, Lord Keith

asked with some anxiety, if its presence were inconvenient to Mr. Clare; and being assured of the contrary, said, "Then while you are so kind as to watch over him, I much prefer that things should remain in their present state, than to bring him to a house like this. You do not object?"

"Oh, no; I am so glad. I was only dreading the losing him. I thought Mrs. Menteith wished for him when he is old enough to travel."

"Colin!" said Lord Keith, looking up sharply, "will nothing make the Menteiths understand that I would rather put out the child to nurse in a Highland hut than in that Babel of a nursery of theirs?"

Colin smiled and said, "Isabel does not easily accept an answer she dislikes."

"But remember, both of you," continued Lord Keith, "that happen what may, this poor child is not to be in her charge. I've seen enough of her children left alone in perambulators in the sun. You will be in Edinburgh?" he added, turning to Rachel.

"Yes, when Alick's leave ends."

"I shall return thither when this matter is over; I know I shall be better at home in Scotland, and if I winter in Edinburgh, may be we could make some arrangement for his being still under your eye."

Rachel went home more elevated than she had been for months past.

THE MYSTERIOUS LIGHTS.

Thompson, J A

Flag of Our Union (1854-1870); Mar 18, 1865; 20, 11; American Periodicals

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these objects soon became dim and indistinct in the blackness of the coming night. Dropping the reins, I entrusted myself and safety to that sagacious animal's instinct, knowing full well, that if there was a farmhouse within reach he would discover it, and lead me to it accordingly. In ten minutes, after giving him the reins, he stopped suddenly in the road and began snuffing the air, then struck off at right angles, from the main road, and entered the timber and underbrush on my right. Holding out my arms in opposite directions, I discovered that I was in a narrow path that led—I knew not where, but as I had entrusted my safety to the care of my horse, I determined to allow him to have his own way. For nearly a quarter of an hour I rode on in a brisk trot over this gloomy unknown road, each moment expecting to see or hear some sign that would lead me to some shelter, but I was aware of nothing, save the continued splash—splash of my horse's feet in the mud and water on the ground, and an occasional spark of fire, struck from a flint by one of his shoes.

At the end of fifteen minutes, I came to an opening, of not more than two hundred yards in circumference; in the centre of this, stood a dark object, which I immediately recognized as a house.

Seeing no lights, and judging from the lateness of the hour that the inmates were all abed, I dismounted; fastening the bridle rein to the fence, I advanced to the door and made the usual signal for admittance, but received no reply. I then rapped as loud as I could with the butt of my riding whip, but still no answer; I then began kicking the door with my foot, calling aloud, at the same time, for admittance. In a short time a husky voice, on the inside, demanded my name and business.

"Jones," said I, giving the first name I could think of. "I am a belated traveller, and desire food and a night's lodging for myself and horse."

"You are not a ghost then, are you?" continued the voice.

"Not by a good deal, my kind sir; but can't say how soon I shall be one, if you don't let me in out of this storm, and give me something to eat," I said, in half smiling wonder at the singular question of the insider.

"Then wait a moment, and I will let you in."

The "moment" was occupied by the man in removing bolts and bars from the door; then it swung open and I entered. Before me stood a man with a haggard face and dishevelled hair, with a gun raised to his shoulder pointing directly at me; in a corner crouched a woman in her night clothes, her face pale as death, and who looked as though she were frightened half out of her wits.

"Put down your gun, my good man," I said. "I am neither ghost nor hobgoblin, but of real flesh and blood like yourself."

This appeared to satisfy him in a manner, and putting the gun in the corner, he advanced very cautiously to where I stood, and began feeling my arms and examining my person. When he had done, he said, in a placid voice:

"I believe you; you may sit down there by the fire and dry your clothes."

"No; I must see that my horse is sheltered before I can take any rest myself."

"Then bring him around into the yard, you will find food and shelter for him at the back of the house."

I did as directed, wondering all the time in my mind, what could be the matter with the man in the house. After seeing that my animal was properly cared for, I again entered the cabin. The woman, by this time, had changed her clothes and was going about preparing my supper. I took a seat near the fire, where I had a full view of both host and hostess.

They were young, and according to my judgment, had not been married long. After examining their faces narrowly, and watching their movements for a short time, I concluded that my host and his wife were frightened, wonderfully frightened, at something, but what that something was, I was at that moment unable to determine. After I had finished my meal I was shown a small pallet on the floor, where I was told I could lay down to rest as soon as I felt so disposed. As I had been travelling all day and the greater part of the night, I sorely felt the need of a few hours' sleep; so removing my coat and boots I stretched myself at full length on the pallet, and in a few moments was wrapt in profound slumber.

How long I slept I know not; but this I do know, that I was awakened by one of the loudest, wildest, and most unearthly screams that I ever heard; I sprang to my feet and gazed about the room. The man and woman were in the same position as I had first seen them that night; my first thought was that the man was about to take the life of his wife with the weapon that he held in his hand, but I advanced towards him, for the purpose of wringing it from his grasp, the same scream was again repeated; this time it came from the yard in front of the house. Going to the window, I lifted the curtain and looked forth. There I saw an object clothed in white, dancing about over the yard, now and then, throwing up its long, white arms and uttering the same screams that had so startled me but a few moments previous. For five minutes, I stood and watched this ghostly apparition, as it performed its gyrations over the ground; at the end of that time it disappeared from my sight and did not visit the cabin again that night. Dropping the curtain I resumed my seat near the fire. Taking out my watch I found that it was just one o'clock.

"Come, my friend," said I, pointing to a chair at my side. "Come, sit down here and tell me what all this means."

The man advanced trembling, and mechanically took the chair that I had designated. For some moments he remained silent, then in a faltering voice, which plainly indicated the extent of his fright, he said:

"Before I say anything in regard to these strange proceedings, I wish to show you another sight, which you have not seen," saying which, he arose and began ascending a ladder, which stood in one corner of the room, and which led to the loft above. I arose and followed close at his heels. When we reached the upper apartment he approached a small window, which was made in the further end of the room; removing a dusty paper that was fastened over it, he told me to look out. I did so, and on an elevated piece of land, not distant more than a quarter of a mile, I saw two lights, one red, the other white, and but a few feet distant from each other. Just beyond the lights, was an old log building which I recognized as a church. By the light reflected from its side I discovered that the opening, for several yards around the building, was used as a burying ground, and it was on two newly made graves that the lights were situated. They burned with a bright, steady blaze, notwithstanding the wind was blowing a perfect gale during the time I was observing them from the window. As I was about replacing the paper over the window, a prolonged, dismal wail, as if uttered by some one suffering the most intense agony, was borne to my ears upon the advancing wind; then followed a succession of reports like the discharge of heavy artillery. The man at my side fairly shook with affright as these sounds fell upon his ears. I looked forth again, but could see nothing save the lights, the church and the graves. I must confess that I was frightened, although I claim to possess rather a philosophical turn of mind; yet, in this particular case, my philosophy failed me. Had the same thing occurred in some town or village graveyard, I should have thought nothing of it, for I could have attributed the cause to some person or persons, endeavoring to frighten the inhabitants; but for such a thing to be seen and heard here, in this wild and sparsely settled region, was beyond my power to comprehend. I closed the window and followed my friend quickly down the ladder. Seating ourselves again by the man at my side said:

"Myself and wife have been married just two years this fall, and have been living on this place about half that time. Previous to my moving here, this farm, which by the way, is a very good one, belonged to my uncle, who resided in D— county. At his death he left his estate to his two nephews, myself and cousin. The substance of the will was this: two thirds of the property should belong to the nephew who should reside on this farm for the space of four years. What reasons my uncle had for so disposing of his estate, I am unable to say. As I was married at the time of my uncle's death, and my cousin was not, that relative proposed to me, that, if I would give him his portion in ready money, and take mine in real estate, that I might have the two third part spoken of in the will. I accepted the proposition and moved here accordingly. My relative took the money and left the country, and I have not heard from him since the day of his departure. My uncle, at his own request, was buried over there in that graveyard. In regard to the sights which you have seen here to-night, I know nothing of them whatever, save the very same things have been repeated each night, for the last week. I never was a believer in ghosts, or anything of the kind, yet I am at a loss to know how to account for these strange nightly proceedings, and unless I can discover the cause in a short time I shall be compelled to leave my place, and thereby forfeit my claim to the two third part."

Here he ceased speaking and began replenishing the fire with fuel. At length, after a few moments' silence, thinking I had a clue to the mystery, I spoke: "Friend," said I, "I believe I can clear up this matter for you."

"Do it," he said, opening his eyes wide in expectation, "and half I possess is yours."

"I shall charge nothing for my services; only let me take your trusty rifle, and I promise you that before sunrise you shall have the whole thing satisfactorily explained."

"You don't intend to go alone, do you?"

"I think I can work to a better advantage alone; beside, you had better stay to keep your wife company; she would not like to be left alone under the present circumstances."

"May Heaven protect you, and bring you safely back."

After examining the gun and a brace of pistols which I carried in my belt, to see that they were in shooting order, I bade the man good night and left the cabin. The storm was still raging, but this only served to facilitate my progress; had it been light I should have had to proceed with more caution; as it was I was guided by the lights and protected from the view by the darkness. The lights were as bright as when I first saw them, but the shrills and reports came only at long intervals. Taking a circuitous route, so as to come up in the rear of the church, I strode briskly forward, protecting at the same time the tube of the gun from the rain with the skirts of my coat. After a half hour's work, with some trouble and great caution, I arrived safely in the rear of the church—then creeping noiselessly forward on my hands and knees, I reached the corner, peering around which, I saw the lights burning brilliantly on the two newly made graves; I drew my head back and waited further signs.

Five minutes passed, and I heard no noise of any kind; but at the end of that time, as I was about

changing my post of observation to the next corner, I heard a footstep almost within reach of me. I lay perfectly quiet and the footsteps passed by into the lighted space beyond. It was a tall figure dressed in the habiliments of the grave, with bloodshot eyes and pallid face, evidently the same ghost that had but a short time previous visited the cabin, and disturbed my rest.

When it had got within a few feet of the light it suddenly halted, and began making these horrid noises, which I have already described. Just at this point I raised the rifle to my cheek and fired, and as the clear report rang out on the midnight air, the ghost, the lights, the graves, and everything visible before me instantly disappeared from view, and left me surrounded by a wall of Egyptian-like darkness, with not a sound to break the stillness, save the melancholy sighing of the storm through the treetops over head, and the whistling of the wind around the corner of the church where I lay. My feelings, just at this moment, can better be imagined than described: I was not frightened, for the objects calculated to frighten had disappeared; but I was astonished, bewildered, like one awaking from some strange dream. This last performance was something I had not expected, and I began to wish myself safely out of the bedeviled neighborhood. I arose to my feet, and was about to quit the premises, when my ears detected a low groan coming from the darkness on my right. I followed in the direction from which the sound came, and had not proceeded far, when the same figure, which I had twice before seen, sprang from the ground, and began running in the opposite direction. I followed in swift pursuit, and had the satisfaction of soon overtaking it, and making it my prisoner.

I then led the way back to the cabin, followed by my ghost prisoner, whose arms I had securely fastened with a small cord. We were met at the fence by the farmer and his wife, who had watched a part of my proceedings from the loft window, and who were now almost frantic with joy at my successful adventure. Having entered the cabin, I commenced examining my prisoner. Unwinding the sheet from about his body—for I knew it was a man by his voice—I discovered that instead of a "raw-head and bloody-bones," he was a genuine human being, and of no small dimensions either. A few drops of turpentine and a rag, soon removed the coat of white paint from his face, and as I gave it the last stroke with the rag, my host threw up his arms in astonishment, and exclaimed:

"Good God! it is my cousin!"

I was not at all surprised at this discovery, for he was the very person whom I had suspected from the first, to be at the bottom of this little mystery. When I had dressed the wound, made in the fleshly part of the arm, where my shot had taken effect, I gave him a seat by the fire, where he sat down and acknowledged the whole thing, to his now enlightened but indignant relatives. He said that the lights and noises were made by combustible and explosive chemicals, so arranged that he could extinguish the one and suppress the other at his will; and that when I fired, he immediately put out the lights and stopped the noises, and would have effectually evaded my search, had not the wound, made by the ball in his arm, pained him so severely that he was compelled to discover himself to me by his groans.

I will not give his whole story in detail, but merely the substance, which was about as follows: He said that after obtaining his portion of the estate he had travelled from one place to another, gaming, and keeping all sorts of company, until he had spent the last cent his uncle had left him. Recollecting that the condition of his deceased uncle's will was, "that his cousin should remain on the farm as a tenant for the space of four years, but in case he should leave it before that time had fully expired, the property would then fall to him, he had, therefore, made his way back to the neighborhood and adopted the means that we have already described, for routing his relative and taking possession of his property.

Dear reader, I have not told you this story simply to disprove the existence of ghosts, for ghosts may exist in all their "ghostly grandeur" for all that I know; but to show to what miserable subterfuges humanity will sometimes resort to procure the immortal dollar.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

THE MYSTERIOUS LIGHTS.

BY J. A. THOMPSON.

In the fall of 1850, I had occasion to visit that wild and picturesque country, known in the West, as the "Ozark Region," "laying and being" in the southern part of Missouri, and the northern portion of Arkansas—in fact, forming the dividing line between these two States. At the time of which I write, "the region" was sparsely settled, and it was considered a good day's travel from one inn, or house of public entertainment, to another.

It was a cold, disagreeable day in the latter part of October, that I set out on horseback from the "Cross Keys," a roadside inn, situated in the mountains, and to a settlement distant some thirty miles. The road that had to follow, led through mountainous passes over hills, and across dark valleys, covered with heavy growths of timber. In the summer, or early autumn, this route would have been delightful to the traveller who admires wild and romantic scenery, but on the present occasion it was to me anything but delightful.

By the middle of the afternoon, I had got fairly out of the mountainous country, and entered upon a level track of land covered by a dark forest of heavy timber. The clouds that had obscured the sun all day now began to thicken and look black and threatening. The wind, cold and piercing, whistled through the forest in a manner which I knew indicated a coming storm. I was not mistaken in my conjectures, for in a short time the rain began to fall in torrents. I was soon drenched by the falling water. Judging by the distance I had come, and the appearance of the country, I knew that I was not far from the settlement, and I determined to push forward as fast as possible. For an hour or more, I rode on at a brisk trot. It was now nearly dark, yet the storm continued to rage in all its wild fury. The driving rain and sleet almost blinded me and my horse as we pushed forward in the fast gathering gloom. I endeavored to discover, if possible, some sign of the settlement or some human habitation where I might obtain shelter for the night. Whenever I raised my head to discover my whereabouts, my eyes invariably received such a discharge of sleet and water, that I was compelled to lower it again to ward off the damaging effects of the storm. Thus my powers of vision were confined to the limited space occupied by my horse's neck and the pummel of my saddle. Even

THE SMALL COUNTRY HOUSE; OR, CURIOSITY AND JEALOUSY.

On a fresh June morning that seemed as if it was made out of sunshine and the breath of flowers, a young officer of the — Guards was walking through one of the most beautiful of the suburbs of London. This young man, whom we shall call Sydney Hammond, was known in the fashionable world for an eccentric but amiable person, of excellent family. He was usually seen in the best social circles, and frequented the favorite places of amusement; was so accomplished as to be looked on at his club as authority in matters of taste, and was possessed of a fine person and intellectual features. Our story has to do with a single peculiarity appertaining to his character—that of a restless and importunate curiosity. He had been a student of books, and of late had turned his attention to society and its secrets, which he had an insatiable desire to penetrate. This weakness or passion of his nature grew out of a wish to reform abuses and redress wrongs. He had a particular fancy for unravelling the mysteries of a love adventure.

On the previous day, while riding at the same hour and on the same road, he had noticed a private carriage driving rapidly, had followed it at some distance, and had seen a lady alight from it, just within the shelter of a small bit of woodland. Passing through this with hurried steps, and what Hammond thought an air of trepidation, the lady had stopped opposite a range of half a dozen very pretty cottages, each standing by itself, with grounds filled with shrubbery. She was evidently undecided to which she should go; but at length, seeming to recollect, she approached the gate of the fourth, glancing timidly about her while her gloved hand rested a moment on the stem of an acacia. A cluster of hazel trees concealed the young man, who had dismounted, secured his horse, and stood where he could scrutinize her movements, convinced that she was engaged in some secret enterprise. She expected admittance, certainly; why did not the gate open? The next moment he heard the rustling of a key in the lock. The lady opened it, but did not go in. A sudden thought appeared to strike her; she closed the gate quickly, drew out the key, and hurried away, almost flying along the

path; and 'Sydney distinctly heard her exclaim, "I cannot—I cannot to-day."

As she passed, he had a full view of her pale and beautiful face. Her figure was the perfection of unconscious grace, and in the slightly drooping head was a touching air of sadness.

"It is a first and sincere passion," he said to himself, with man's usual alacrity in jumping to a conclusion. Meanwhile the lady had gained the wood, and, standing under the shadow of the trees, opened a small gold embroidered pocket book, from which she took a letter. She read it carefully; but presently, as footsteps were heard along a path near, she started, folded the letter quickly, and walked back to her carriage. Stepping in it, she was driven rapidly back towards London.

There was quite enough in all this to rouse the master passion of young Hammond. He had no doubt the country house was a rendezvous of love; and he thought of the lady's beauty, her white bonnet, her dress of pale blue silk, and her fine cashmere shawl fluttering in the breeze.

He had no means of ascertaining who the lady was; but fortune favored him strangely the same evening. He was at the opera with one of his intimate friends, who had often shared his philosophy and his cigars. They talked of art, the drama, and musical artists, and Hammond expressed his conviction that nature, after all, offered the most interesting study. Her comedy was always new, and her groupings piquant. It was not long before his attention, directed always to the dress circle, was keenly aroused by seeing a very beautiful woman enter a particular box. He recognized her at once for the lady he had seen in the morning. His friend informed him the gentleman who accompanied her, a noble-looking man about forty, was Sir Arthur Wareham, a wealthy but eccentric baronet, who resided nearly all the year at his country seat, had not been long married, and went little into London society. The lady was doubtless his wife. She was little known in the *beau monde*, being said to live in retirement, apparently devoted entirely to her husband. Hammond watched her as she sat in front of the box, partly concealed by the large fan with

which she played gracefully. Once, when her husband spoke to her, he saw her become crimson, and turn aside her face, as if to inhale the fragrance of her bouquet. "No wonder," he thought, "that she blushes under his searching look. I will, I must pursue this adventure."

The next morning, about nine, our curious friend, as already mentioned, was again on the suburban road; this time on foot. He walked about in the wood for some time; and had begun to despair of meeting the lady, when he caught sight of a green veil fluttering for an instant between the bushes. Quicken-
ing his pace, he saw the wearer, and recognized her, though she had changed her white bonnet for a straw one, and wore another dress. Her graceful form and rapid, impatient movement were too familiar to be mistaken. She seemed not at ease, and apprehensive of observation. As she came out of the shelter of the trees, she paused a moment, as if to recover her self-possession; then went up to the little gate, and opened it with a key. She was obliged to use all her strength to push it open. Closing it behind her, she presently disappeared among the shrubbery.

Sydney's curiosity was on the alert. Looking about hastily he noticed a placard bearing the words "To Let" hanging from the gate-post of the fifth house, the upper windows of which commanded a view of the garden and grounds of the neighboring one. He lost no time in hastening thither. Inside the gate he saw a young woman who seemed to have charge of the premises. She admitted him readily, and showed him through the rooms. The rent had been reduced, she said; he might take the whole house, or apartments, by the month.

"Is not the next house tenanted?" inquired Hammond. "Or is it to be let?"

"Oh no, sir; I believe it is occupied. It is partly furnished."

"Do you know who lives there?"

"No, sir; it is only a few weeks since I came here."

Sydney put a sovereign into the girl's hand, and asked permission to stand at the window of one unfurnished room, for the purpose of admiring the view, which embraced woods, water, and the distant city. The girl courtesed and retired, not a little surprised, but having no doubt all was right with so generous a gentleman. He remained leaning out

of the window more than half an hour, watching the windows of the other house. Not a sign of habitation could he observe; but his patience was at length rewarded by seeing the green veil fluttering amid the foliage in the grounds. There was the object of his pursuit, walking in the garden! After a little while she stopped, and, standing for a moment, lifted her hand to her face. "She is weeping," murmured Sydney. Then he saw her stoop and pluck a rose, and suddenly turn round with a startled look, as if fearful of being surprised.

"Is this all?" muttered the spy. "Have I taken all this trouble only to see a beautiful lady gather a rose in the garden?" Yet there was something in her manner so extraordinary he could not doubt that an important mystery was concerned.

While he was pondering the matter, the lady disappeared in the foliage. Sydney heard the gate open and shut; he leaned far out of the window, but could see nothing; then he hurried down to the gate and looked in every direction. Turning back, he saw the young woman aforementioned feeding her fowls before the kitchen door.

"Tell me, my pretty girl," he said to her, "are you sure that nice country house is not to let also?"

"Oh no, sir. I heard, now I recollect, that it was to be sold. Did you read the advertisement, sir? The house belongs to a man who lives in the country."

"Ah, it is to be sold," cried Hammond, very much pleased.

"Do you wish to purchase it, sir?"

"To purchase it? No! But I wish to look at it," replied the young gentleman. "Is there no one who can show it to me?"

"The man who lives in yonder house has the charge of it, and takes care of the garden. But he is gone away to day."

"And the key of the house?"

"The person must have it who sometimes occupies one of the apartments. Perhaps the lawyer near here who does business for the man who owns the place may have another key."

"A key I must have!" cried Hammond, with the impetuous energy of a person who is bent on the discovery of some hidden treasure. "Go directly for one to the lawyer, my girl. Here is something to quicken your movements."

The young woman lost no time in going. "He is certainly crazy"—she muttered to herself; "but he is liberal, and I think he is good."

She returned without the key. "He will have to send to get it from the owner. You can have it to-morrow."

"To-morrow! it is a century. Wait till to-morrow? You are sure, then, quite sure, that I can get the key to-morrow?"

"Yes, sir; certain, for I have orders to show you the house."

"It is well, then; to-morrow, before ten o'clock, I must see the house throughout, from garret to cellar."

Just at this moment Sydney noticed a gentleman on horseback in front of the gate of the house in question. He was evidently a man of rank and fashion, as one might see from his distinguished appearance. He had a riding-whip in his hand, which he cracked briskly in the air, apparently with some feeling of impatience, now and then hitting his spirited horse. Suddenly he turned around and saw Hammond. He started, bit his lip, and urged the horse forward a pace or two; then, as if taking a second thought, reined him in quickly, and turned short round. The roll of a carriage was heard a little way off, and he quickly rode away in the direction of the sound.

"That gentleman," observed our curious friend, "is perhaps the lodger you mentioned?"

"I cannot tell you, sir, for I have never seen him."

The young officer returned home, looking anxiously in every direction for the gentleman on horseback who had manifested such emotion at sight of him. He was now determined on making some discovery that should explain this mysterious affair.

The next morning, at eight, he walked to the place of rendezvous. The young woman went for the keys, and soon returned. "The gentleman," she said, "told me to ask you to ring the bell before you open, for the lodger might possibly be at home."

"Does the lawyer know him?"

"Oh no, sir! The owner is coming to-day to give his agent some further instructions."

"Onward!" muttered the young man, as he approached the iron-barred gate. "The house is for sale: I have a right to see it, and

who is to know of anything else I want to investigate?"

He rang the bell at the gate. There was no answer; and nothing showed the presence of a human being on the premises. He opened the gate, closed it behind him, and ascended the steps of the house, not without a feeling of awe and trepidation. The garden was in full view, but he did not stop to admire the flowers; he had observed them sufficiently from his window the preceding day. He produced another key, opened the house door, and crossed the threshold, looking around him. He judged it prudent to close the door behind him, which he did, as softly as possible.

All was silent within the dwelling. He saw nothing remarkable; it was only a well-built, neat country-house. He stepped into a parlor, which he found simply furnished with a few necessary articles, nothing worthy of note except a piano. Returning to the passage, he noticed two doors leading to other apartments, on the right and the left, and saw, not without surprise, that the door on the left was a little way open. Behind it hung a curtain of red damask. With resolute though trembling steps he drew aside the curtain very softly, stepped forward, and saw that he had entered a singularly decorated bedchamber, furnished as the sleeping-room of a cavalry officer.

Though the window-shutters were closed, sufficient light came into the room to render every object plainly visible, and our zealous searcher after hidden knowledge could see that every article of furniture was of the most elegant description. On the walls hung weapons of various quaint and curious forms, and pipes in many a foreign device, with articles of warfare that might have adorned a museum; daggers, rapiers, bowie-knives, Damascus sabres, Indian arrows, Japan pipes, carbines, muskets, Albanese pistols and swords of antique and modern fashion. These were singularly contrasted with Chinese, Malayan, West Indian, Turkish, and Persian pipes.

Sydney stood in blank astonishment. "A curious love affair," he said to himself.

A step forward brought him in full view of an iron bedstead, covered with a counterpane of satin brocade, half buried in the crimson curtains that sheltered a recess. A splendid leopard skin, with silver claws, lay across the foot. Over the mantel, on the opposite side,

was a collection of very richly-bound and choice books; and vases, statuettes, ornamental candlesticks, and numerous other trifling articles of luxury bespoke both wealth and taste. Under the mirror, on a piece of velvet, lay a chibouk pipe and a pair of Persian slippers, between which was a pastel painting, the features of which seemed provokingly familiar. He stepped back to get a better view. "It is very strange!" he murmured, at length. "That painting must be more than a hundred years old, and yet it is as like Lady Wareham as if she had sat for it to the artist."

For some minutes he was absorbed in the contemplation of the mysterious picture. On a sudden, he started, and looked quickly around him. He had heard the iron gate open and shut, and now he distinctly heard the rattling of a key in the house door.

"The mischief!" he exclaimed, "now I am really in need of philosophy," and he stroked his beard, as if expecting to find and produce it from that respectable locality.

His first impulse was to assume the right of inspecting the premises, as a person who wished to purchase; then he reflected that if the visitor were a lady, he would lose the golden opportunity fate had thrown into his power, of discovering the secret that had so much disturbed him. Without a second thought he darted behind the curtains that shaded the recess in which stood the bed. He had scarcely concealed himself, when the curtain that hung over the entrance was thrown back, and Lady Wareham entered. Crossing the room, she sank into an easy chair, and sighed deeply. "I scarcely thought," she murmured, in a soft voice, "that I should ever have strength to get here."

She rose, loosened the ribbon that confined her hat, and drew near the bed. The concealed spy dared hardly draw his breath. The lady removed her hat and threw it on the counterpane, then went up to the portrait and gazed at that long and steadily. Her head drooped, and she appeared overcome with some sad recollection. Stepping back, she sank into the chair, sobbing convulsively, and covered her face with her hands. Then her arms fell, and she looked up again, more beautiful for her tears, the spectator thought, and for the gentle melancholy that sat on her fair brow. She indulged this mood, wiping away the tears as they gathered in her eyes.

Presently Hammond heard a light rustling at the door. With a sudden start of terror the lady turned, first in one direction then in another. She sprang to her feet, pale as death, and looked eagerly about her; then, as if convinced that there was nothing to be alarmed at, for a deep stillness ensued, she waved her head sadly, as if ashamed of her own fears.

Sydney, however, was keenly on the lookout, and distinctly saw the figure of a man, who drew the curtain cautiously back and peered into the apartment. He could get but a glimpse of his face as he parted the drapery, but under the curtain he saw a polished boot, with a silver spur. All this escaped the lady's observation, she having her face turned from the entrance as she reclined in the easy chair. The officer's situation was becoming more involved and peculiar. He began to be uneasy at the evident mystery, which he was nevertheless determined to penetrate. What could it all mean?

The lady now rose and went to a small rose-wood cabinet, curiously carved in antique fashion. She took out of her pocket a key, with which she proceeded to open it.

"Aha!" thought Hammond, "she is prying into her lover's private papers, and knows not that he is looking at her. It is all very well, if I can only get away unobserved."

As the lady opened the cabinet, the gentleman who had been standing at the entrance stepped into the room. Hammond now recognized him for the same gentleman he had seen on horseback the day before, who had flourished his riding-whip and started off when he heard the roll of a carriage. The lady turned and saw him. He confronted her with gazing eyes, while she grew pale, and retreated a step backwards.

"Matilda!"

There was a world of reproach and concentrated passion in the tone. She could not mistake his meaning.

"Arthur, you deceive yourself," she faltered, at length.

"You dare say that to me—and here! Would to Heaven that I could distrust the evidence of my own senses! I would not trust them at first. But yesterday I followed you. You came to this place yesterday. Today"—

"Arthur, I shall not attempt to vindicate

myself from such cruel accusations. Yes, kill me, if you can suppose me guilty!"

"If I can suppose you guilty! And you doubt it! Oh, lost to all sense of shame! I find you here, in your lover's apartment, in the act of opening his cabinet, your hat thrown carelessly on his couch!"

Hammond trembled from head to foot, in spite of his firmness and resolution, heartily wishing he had never attempted to penetrate the mystery of a woman's movements.

"O Matilda!" exclaimed the husband—for it was indeed the husband—who, almost frenzied with anguish and rage, seemed capable of any deed of desperation.

"Arthur, torture me not! Say not another word till you know!"

The husband flung back fiercely the hand stretched towards him. "Silence!" cried he. "I am satisfied already." He stooped to look within the cabinet, and laid his hand on a packet of letters. "These, these," he said, hoarsely, "shall be the witnesses to prove your guilt or innocence."

The lady bowed her head. The husband tore open the package and drew out one of the letters. There was no envelope, and he saw that it was not in the handwriting of his wife, though from a lady. He threw it angrily on the floor.

"I understand it all now!" cried he, in a bitter tone of contempt. "These letters are from a rival! It was jealousy that brought you here; you wished to examine or possess yourself of these documents."

Another package of letters lay in the cabinet, which Sir Arthur now took out. They were tied with a white ribbon, and the outside envelope was directed in a hand which he instantly recognized as his wife's. His fury now reached its height. He seized her hand with a violent grasp, and thrust the package before her eyes. She uttered a cry of pain, and, when released from his gripe, sank to the floor.

Hammond had, till now, kept silence; but the wild aspect of Sir Arthur caused him to fear the perpetration of some terrible deed, and he thought it his duty to present himself upon the scene, whatever might be the consequence. Dashing aside the curtain, he advanced towards the others.

The husband glared at him, while astonishment and terror almost paralyzed Lady Wareham. Sydney addressed himself to the former.

"Permit me, sir," he said, "to observe, that your impetuosity in this matter is unreasonable."

"The devil!" exclaimed the husband, his eyes literally flashing fire. "This is something extraordinary, upon my word!"

"But, sir!"

"Silence! You need not speak, sir; I know everything you could say."

Then, turning to his wife—"And she dared deny her guilt," he continued, with a frightful expression of suppressed rage; "even while the partner of it was concealed behind the curtain!"

The poor lady looked up with the appealing anguish that gleams amid the tears of a wounded fawn.

"What said you, Arthur? O heavens! is it, indeed, possible that he can so misjudge me? Then it were better that I should die!"

"Oh, this hypocrisy will avail nothing, madam; you may be silent; your lover is here to answer for you."

"Indeed, sir," began Hammond, who hardly knew how to begin extricating himself from the dilemma, and had turned hesitatingly from one to the other—"indeed, sir, you are too hasty."

"I beg you, sir, to remember that I am no soft-hearted, ridiculous, forgiving husband! Now you have presented yourself, my business is first with you."

Hammond took a card from his pocket-book, and handed it coolly to Sir Arthur.

"Madam," he then said, turning to the lady, "it would give me pleasure to be of the least service to you, notwithstanding the unceremonious manner of my presentation to your acquaintance. I retire, without venturing to hope for your forgiveness for my unwarranted intrusion. I beg you, however, to believe me incapable of betraying secrets which have thus accidentally come to my knowledge. When I leave this place, I shall forget that I have been here. The only duty remaining to me is to explain my presence in this house."

Addressing Sir Arthur, he continued: "You, perhaps, have not noticed the announcement that this place is for sale. I wished to look at the house, for the purpose, I freely confess to you, of discovering something extraordinary, which I supposed it to contain. With this view, I came hither this morning. I believed the house deserted, and had not the

slightest anticipation of such a meeting. For my curiosity and indiscretion, I ask pardon. I assure you, you can rely on my silence."

"You will hear from me, sir," was the baronet's reply, as he turned to depart, evidently disbelieving Hammond's explanation.

His wife started up and rushed after him. "You shall know everything!" she cried. "You are under a cruel mistake! I came only"—But, shaking off her grasp with violence, the husband hurried out of the room like one beside himself. The unhappy lady could follow him no farther than the door, when she fell to the ground insensible.

Full of remorse, Hammond strove to render what assistance he could. Kneeling by her, he chafed her delicate white hands and marble brow, wondering within himself at his own temerity in daring to touch them. Then gently lifting up her head, he laid it on the sofa cushions, and going to the windows, threw them open to admit the fresh air.

The morning breeze came in laden with fragrance, and brought back life to the lady. She started up, as soon as her strength returned, looked wildly about her, rose slowly to her feet, and attempted to go towards the door; but was unable to walk more than a few steps, when she tottered and would have fallen, had she not grasped the door to support herself.

Hammond advanced towards her.

"Sir, tell me," she began.

"I entreat your pardon, lady, for my presence here, but just now no time is to be lost! We must prevent your friend's coming, by all means; for if your husband sees him!"

"What do you mean? Of whom do you speak?"

"Again I beg your pardon, madam; but, I have witnessed everything."

The lady raised her head, and drew up her slender form with proud dignity.

"I do not understand you, sir," said she; "who is it you call my friend?"

"You know better than I do, madam! You will ruin everything if you persist in this needless affectation of not understanding me. Is he here? Is he gone? Do you expect him?"

"Sir, again I tell you, you forget!"

"I beg you, madam, to consider what fatal consequences may ensue, should your husband meet him here. The meeting must be prevented at all hazards."

"Sir, I expect no one here, and am astonished beyond measure to see you in this house."

"What a terrible business!" exclaimed the young man, in much vexation. "Madam, I comprehend why you are unwilling to admit the truth; but since I have been an involuntary witness of the scene that has just passed, you must allow me to be of some service to you! Where is he? I will seek him this instant, and inform him of what has occurred, that he may provide for his own safety."

"I do not believe, sir, you know with whom you are speaking! Have you been in this place before, when ladies of the ballet and persons of suspicious associations were in the habit of coming here?"

"Why speak in this manner, my dear madam! I am convinced that you are not on a level with such persons; your looks and manner bespeak refinement and familiarity with the best society. I should confess my own vulgarity, did I hesitate to acknowledge this. But I entreat you to remember, madam, how necessary it is that a warning should be conveyed to him of the danger that threatens him. I fear your husband will not be disposed to spare his life."

"Will you have the goodness to inform me of whom you are talking?"

"Of—of—your lover, madam."

A crimson tide rushed to the lady's forehead, and she trembled with anger. "Am I dreaming?" she cried, "or dare I believe my senses?" She sank on a seat, overcome with her emotion.

Hammond was more and more puzzled what to think. "Strange, 'tis all very strange!" he muttered to himself. "There is more than affectation certainly, in this surprise! We have been mistaken. Yes, yes," he continued, glancing towards her, as she sat with her head drooped, in an attitude of the deepest dejection, "I have been misled into judging her as the world usually judges, without inquiry and without knowledge."

While thus pondering the matter, he heard Lady Wareham say very softly, as if hardly conscious that she spoke at all, "O Bruno! Bruno! what misery have you caused me!"

"Aha!" thought he, "so, that is his name! I was just beginning to be fool enough to believe that a lady might come to this place as innocently as if she went to a church. Madam," said he, "it appears strange that

Mr. Bruno, if that is his name, should keep a lady waiting so long!"

But he was startled out of his wondering, when the poor lady suddenly uttered a piercing shriek, and covered her face with her hands, as if she strove to shut out some horrible vision.

Hammond, determined, if possible, to get to the bottom of the mystery, resumed, after a pause:—

"You were here yesterday, as I know, and perhaps the day before"—

"Sir! sir! I implore you to have some mercy, some respect for my sorrow! If the entreaties of an unhappy woman may move you, go and find my husband: bring him back here, for I will not leave this apartment without him."

Sydney's curiosity was stronger than ever, as he felt more and more at a loss to discover the mystery that lay hid in that beautiful face, in that form bowed with grief, in those tears and that pleading tone; but he hastened to assure the lady he was ready to comply with her request, and thought it best that the baronet should return. He bowed low to her and quitted the room.

He knew not exactly where to look for the gentleman, but conjectured that his jealousy would not suffer him to stay far off. And his supposition was correct. As Hammond first caught sight of him, he was coming towards the house; so that the request for his return was unnecessary. Sydney turned and followed him.

When the baronet entered the room already described, he saw his wife weeping bitterly, and apparently overwhelmed with despair. When she saw him, she made an effort to recover her self-possession, suppressed her tears, and looked up with an expression of haughty pride, which said plainly,

"Let the worst come; I am prepared for all, even for death—for that would be nothing in comparison to what I have already suffered."

Sir Arthur came directly up to her, took her hand, pressed it to his heart, and, stooping, touched his lips to her forehead. The lady looked up in his face in mute amazement; she did not understand the meaning of this sudden change.

"Matilda!" he faltered, "forgive my cruel conduct; I was mad! But I am in my senses now. I know you well, and I know you can-

not be—it is impossible that you can be guilty!"

"Heaven be praised!" exclaimed the lady faintly, and sank into the arms extended to clasp her. Then lifting up her beautiful head, she said, "Our happiness—our mutual trust, is saved! You shall now hear everything—you shall know all, and then you shall be my judge!" The embrace that followed bespoke the perfection of restored confidence. Just at that moment Hammond came into the room.

He was not a little surprised at this manifestation of renewed affection after the scene he had already witnessed; and this new aspect of affairs not only bewildered him, but caused him to feel very much like an unnecessary person in the group.

He bowed respectfully. Sir Arthur looked at him sternly, and was evidently about to get into another passion. "He here again!" he muttered between his teeth. But he restrained his rising anger, for the imploring looks of his lovely wife had resumed their influence.

"I shall relieve you, sir, of my presence," said Hammond, replying to the menacing look.

So saying, he bowed, and turned to leave the room.

"One moment, sir," said Lady Wareham; "stay, I beg of you. I wish, and feel that I ought to explain to you why I came here."

"Madam, I need not assure you that I will gladly remain," answered Hammond, with one of his peculiar smiles, for his curiosity revived at the prospect of learning more.

The baronet's face wore an expression of doubt and impatience, and he evidently wished the intruder in another company, nameless to ears polite. He detested him as a meddling, impertinent stranger, who had thrust himself into his family secrets, and before whom it was now necessary that his wife should explain her conduct. But he had brought on himself this humiliation, and he suppressed the execration that rose to his lips.

Sydney took a seat in the large, easy chair. The lady was seated near the cabinet, from which her husband had taken those mysterious letters. The baronet stood leaning against the mantel.

The window remained open, and the sun-shine, broken into sparkling fragments by the foliage, lay shimmering on the carpet. It gave an air of cheerfulness to the apartment.

Lady Wareham's explanation may be con-

densed into a few words. Her cousin Bruno had lived in her father's house some time before her marriage, and being of a romantic turn, had fallen in love with her. She did not return his affection, though she wrote many letters to him after his departure, expressive of sisterly regard, offering advice in regard to his future career, and encouraging him to realize his ambitious aspirations. This was the summer before she became acquainted with Sir Arthur Wareham. After her marriage, she learned that her wild cousin had joined the French army and gone to the Crimea.

Three days before, a letter had been brought to Lady Wareham, with two keys. Her cousin, mortally wounded in the battle of Alma, had written the letter from his sick couch. He had heard of his cousin's marriage, and wished her all happiness. He expressed some uneasiness about her letters, which he had left with other packages in a small country house in a suburb of London. This house he had occupied some months before, with some wild young friends, and many persons were there entertained, whose correspondence did him no credit. All his letters had been left in a rosewood cabinet in his sleeping apartment, which Bruno had left furnished as when he lived there, and in the same place were letters, among which he would be ashamed to have his fair cousin's found, by persons unacquainted with her purity and goodness, or who might misconstrue or misrepresent her artless expressions of kindness. Hearing that Sir Arthur Wareham would be in London during the session of Parliament, Bruno wrote to his cousin to go herself to the house and take away her letters, as the news of his death would undoubtedly be followed by the sale of his furniture to satisfy his creditors, and scandal might grow out of the discovery of the letters of a noble lady mixed with those of unworthy persons. Directions were sent to the friend to whose care this missive was intrusted, to convey to Lady Wareham the keys of the house, and of the gate.

The letter concluded: "When you set foot there, Matilda, I shall be no more. May Heaven permit my spirit to hover near you! In the garden is a walk lined with monthly roses; I thought of you, dearest cousin, when I planted them last summer. For all the love I bear you, I ask only that you will pluck

one of these roses, and think of your cousin, cold in his foreign grave."

Hammond now comprehended why the lady had plucked the rose. He began to feel a little discontented, that all the mystery that had so interested him should find so simple a solution. He rose and bowed to Sir Arthur and the lady, who did not invite him to stay, nor express any desire to make his acquaintance. It may be hoped, however, that the lesson had some effect in teaching him the folly of indulging idle curiosity, and the imprudence of intruding into the affairs of others.

It only remains to be explained that Sir Arthur, dotingly fond of his young wife, was slightly addicted to jealousy. One of his friends had told him of her early drive in the suburb; her manner had seemed mysterious; evidently something weighing on her mind was concealed from him; and thus he was led to watch her movements and follow her. He, too, had learned a lesson; but his wife loved him too well not to forgive him readily, while she resolved in future to have no secrets from him even in thought.

TONY BUTLER.

CHAPTER LIX.
AN AWKWARD MOMENT.

ALICE started as she heard the name Tony Butler, and for a moment neither spoke. There was confusion and awkwardness on either side,—all the greater that each saw it in the other. She, however, was the first to rally; and, with a semblance of old friendship, held out her hand, and said, “I am so glad to see you, Tony, and to see you safe.”

“I’d not have dared to present myself in such a dress,” stammered he out; “but that scamp Skeffy gave me no choice; he opened the door and pushed me in.”

“Your dress is quite good enough to visit an old friend in. Won’t you sit down?—sit here.” As she spoke, she seated herself on an ottoman, and pointed to a place at her side. “I am longing to hear something about your campaigns. Skeff was so provoking: he only told us about what he saw at Cava, and his own adventures on the road.”

“I have very little to tell, and less time to tell it. I must embark in about half an hour.”

“And where for?”

“For home.”

“So that if it had not been for Skeff’s indiscretion, I should not have seen you?” said she, coldly.

“Not at this moment,—not in this guise.”

“Indeed!” And there was another pause.

“I hope Bella is better. Has she quite recovered?” asked he.

“She is quite well again; she’ll be sorry to have missed you, Tony. She wanted, besides, to tell you how happy it made her to hear of all your good fortune.”

“My good fortune! Oh, yes!—to be sure. It was so unlooked for,” added he, with a faint smile, “that I have hardly been able to realize it yet,—that is, I find myself planning half a dozen ways to earn my bread, when I suddenly remember that I shall not need them.”

“And I hope it makes you happy, Tony?”

“Of course it does. It enables me to make my mother happy, and to secure that we shall not be separated. As for myself alone, my habits are simple enough, and my tastes also. My difficulty will be, I suppose, to acquire more expensive ones.”

“It is not a very hard task, I believe,” said she, smiling.

“Not for others, perhaps; but I was reared in narrow fortune, Alice, trained to submit to many a privation, and told, too,—I’m not sure very wisely,—that such hardships are all the more easily borne by a man of good blood and lineage. Perhaps I did not read my lesson right. At all events, I thought a deal more of my good blood than other people were willing to accord it; and the result was, it misled me.”

“Misled you! and how—in what way?”

“Is it you who ask me this?—you, Alice, who have read me such wise lessons on self-dependence, while Lady Lyle tried to finish my education by showing the evils of over-presumption; and you were both right, though I didn’t see it at the time.”

“I declare I do not understand you, Tony!” said she.

“Well, I’ll try to be clearer,” said he, with more animation. “From the first day I knew you, Alice, I loved you. I need not say that all the difference in station between us never affected my love. You were too far above me in every gift and grace to make rank, mere rank, ever occur to my mind, though others were good enough to jog my memory on the subject.”

“Others! of whom are you speaking?”

“Your brother Mark for one; but I don’t want to think of these things. I loved you, I say, and to that degree, that every change of your manner towards me made the joy or the misery of my life. This was when I was an idle youth, lounging about in that condition of half dependence that, as I look back on, I blush to think I ever could have endured. My only excuse is, however, that I know no better.”

“There was nothing unbecoming in what you did.”

“Yes, there was though. There was this: I was satisfied to hold an ambiguous position,—to be a something, neither master nor servant, in another man’s house, all because it gave me the daily happiness to be near you, and to see you, and to hear your voice. That was unbecoming, and the best proof of it was, that, with all my love and all my devotion, you could not care for me.”

“Oh, Tony! do not say that.”

“When I say care, you could not do more than care; you couldn’t love me.”

“Were you not always as a dear brother to me?”

"I wanted to be more than brother, and when I found that this could not be, I grew very careless, almost reckless, of life; not but that it took a long time to teach me the full lesson. I had to think over, not only all that separated us in station, but all that estranged us in tone of mind; and I saw that your superiority to me chafed me, and that if you should ever come to feel for me, it would be through some sense of pity."

"Oh, Tony!"

"Yes, Alice, you know it better than I can say it; and so I set my pride to fight against my love, with no great success at first. But as I lay wounded in the orchard at Melazzo, and thought of my poor mother and her sorrow, if she were to hear of my death, and compared her grief with what yours would be, I saw what was real in love, and what was mere interest; and I remember I took out my two reliques,—the dearest objects I had in the world,—a lock of my mother's hair and a certain glove,—a white glove you may have seen once on a time; and it was over the little braid of brown hair I let fall the last tears I thought ever to shed in life; and here is the glove,—I give it back to you. Will you have it?"

She took it with a trembling hand; and in a voice of weak but steady utterance said, "I told you that this time would come."

"You did so," said he, gloomily.

Alice rose and walked out upon the balcony; and after a moment Tony followed her. They leaned on the balustrade side by side, but neither spoke.

"But we shall always be dear friends, Tony, sha'n't we?" said she, while she laid her hand gently over his.

"Oh, Alice!" said he, plaintively, "do not—do not, I beseech you—lead me back again into that land of delusion I have just tried to escape from. If you knew how I loved you—if you knew what it costs me to tear that love out of my heart—you'd never wish to make the agony greater to me."

"Dear Tony, it was a more boyish passion. Remember for a moment how it began. I was older than you,—much older as regards life and the world,—and even older by more than a year. You were so proud to attach yourself to a grown woman—you a mere lad; and then your love—for I will grant it was love—dignified you to yourself. It made you more daring where there was

danger, and it taught you to be gentler and kinder and more considerate to every one. All your good and great qualities grew the faster that they had those little vicissitudes of joy and sorrow, the sun and rain of our daily lives; but all that is not love."

"You mean there is no love where there is no return of love?"

She was silent.

"If so, I deny it. The faintest flicker of a hope was enough for me—the merest shadow—a smile, a passing word—your mere 'Thank you, Tony,' as I held your stirrup,—the little word of recognition you would give when I had done something that pleased you,—these—any of them—would send me home happy,—happier, perhaps, than I ever shall be again."

"No, Tony, do not believe that," said she, calmly,—"not," added she, hastily, "that I can acquit myself of all wrong to you. No; I was in fault,—gravely in fault. I ought to have seen what would have come of all our intimacy—I ought to have known that I could not develop all that was best in your nature without making you turn in gratitude—well, in love—to myself; but shall I tell you the truth? I over-estimated my power over you. I not only thought I could make you love, but unlove me; and I never thought what pain that lesson might cost—each of us."

"It would have been fairer to have cast me adrift at first," said he, fiercely.

"And yet, Tony, you will be generous enough one of these days to think differently!"

"I certainly feel no touch of that generosity now."

"Because you are angry with me, Tony,—because you will not be just to me; but when you have learned to think of me as your sister, and can come and say, Dear Alice, counsel me as to this, advise me as to that,—then, there will be no ill-will towards me for all I have done to teach you the great stores that were in your own nature."

"Such a day as that is distant," said he, gloomily.

"Who knows? The changes which work within us are not to be measured by time; a day of sorrow will do the work of years."

"There! that lantern at the peak is the signal for me to be off. The skipper promised to give me notice; but if you will say

“Stay! ‘bo it so. No, no, Alice, do not lay your hand on my arm if you would not have me again deceive myself.”

“You will write to me, Tony?”

He shook his head to imply the negative.

“Well, to Bella, at least?”

“I think not. I will not promise. Why should I? Is it to try and knot together the cords we have just torn, that you may break them again at your pleasure?”

“How ungenerous you are!”

“You reminded me a while ago it was my devotion to you that civilized me; is it not natural I should go back to savagery as my allegiance was rejected?”

“You want to be Garibaldian in love as in war,” said she, smiling.

The deep boom of a gun floated over the bay, and Tony started.

“That’s the last signal,—good-by.” He held out his hand.

“Good-by, dear Tony,” said she. She held her cheek towards him. He hesitated, blushed till his face was in a flame, then stooped and kissed her. Skeff’s voice was heard at the instant at the door, and Tony rushed past him and down the stairs, and then, with mad speed, dashed along to the jetty, leaped into the boat, and, covering his face with his hands, never raised his head till they were alongside.

“You were within an inch of being late, Tony,” cried M’Gruder, as he came up the side. “What detained you?”

“I’ll tell you all another time,—let me go below now;” and he disappeared down the ladder. The heavy paddles flapped slowly, then faster, and the great mass moved on, and made for the open sea.

CHAPTER IX.

A DECK WALK.

THE steamer was well out to sea when Tony appeared on deck. It was a calm starlight night,—fresh, but not cold. The few passengers, however, had sought their berths below, and the only one who lingered on deck was M’Gruder and one other, who, wrapped in a large boat-cloak, lay fast asleep beside the binnacle.

“I was thinking you had turned in,” said M’Gruder to Tony, “as you had not come up.”

“Give me a light,—I want a smoke badly.

I felt that something was wrong with me, though I didn’t know what it was. Is this Rory here?”

“Yes, sound asleep, poor fellow.”

“I’ll wager a trifle he has a lighter heart than either of us, Sam.”

“It might easy be lighter than mine,” sighed M’Gruder, heavily.

Tony sighed too, but said nothing, and they walked along side by side, with that short jerking stride men pace a deck with, feeling some sort of companionship, although no words were exchanged between them.

“You were nigh being late,” said M’Gruder, at last. “What detained you on shore?”

“I saw her!” said Tony, in a low, muffled voice.

“You saw her! Why, you told me you were determined not to see her.”

“So I was, and so I intended. It came about by mere accident. That strange fellow Skeffy, you’ve heard me speak of,—he pushed me plump into the room where she was, and there was nothing to be done but to speak to her.”

“Well?”

“Well! I spoke,” said he, half gruffly; and then, as if correcting the roughness of his tone, added, “It was just as I said it would be,—just as I told you. She liked me well enough as a brother, but never thought of me as anything else. All the interest she had taken in me was out of friendship. She didn’t say this haughtily, not a bit; she felt herself much older than me, she said; that she felt herself better was like enough, but she never hinted it, but she let me feel pretty plainly that we were not made for each other; and though the lesson wasn’t much to my liking, I began to see it was true.”

“Did you really?”

“I did,” said he, with a deep sigh. “I saw that all the love I had borne her was only paid back in a sort of feeling, half-compassionate, half-kindly,—that her interest in me was out of some desire to make something out of me; I mean, to force me to exert myself and do something,—anything besides living a hanger-on at a great house. I have a notion, too,—Heaven knows if there’s anything in it,—but I’ve a notion, Sam, if she had never known me till now,—if she had never seen me idling and lounging about in

that ambiguous position I held,—something between gamekeeper and reduced gentleman,—that I might have had a better chance."

M'Gruder nodded a half-assent, and Tony continued, "I'll tell you why I think so. Whenever she asked me about the campaign and the way I was wounded, and what I had seen, there was quite a change in her voice, and she listened to what I said very differently from the way she heard me when I talked to her of my affection for her."

"There's no knowing them! there's no knowing them!" said M'Gruder, drearily; "and how did it end?"

"It ended that way."

"What way?"

"Just as I told you. She said she'd always be the same as a sister to me, and that when I grew older and wiser I'd see that there should never have been any closer tie between us. I can't repeat the words she used, but it was something to this purport,—that when a woman has been lecturing a man about his line of life, and trying to make something out of him, against the grain of his own indolence, she can't turn suddenly round and fall in love, even though he was in love with her."

"She has a good head on her shoulders, she has," muttered M'Gruder.

"I'd rather she had a little more heart," said Tony, peevishly.

"That may be, but she's right, after all."

"And why is she right? Why shouldn't she see me as I am now, and not persist in looking at me as I used to be?"

"Just because it's not her humor, I suppose; at least, I don't know any better reason."

Tony wheeled suddenly away from his companion, and took two or three turns alone. At last he said, "She never told me so, but I suppose the truth was, all this time she *did* think me very presumptuous; and that what her mother did not scruple to say to me in words, Alice had often said to her own heart."

"You are rich enough now to make you her equal."

"And I'd rather be as poor as I used to be and have the hopes that have left me."

M'Gruder gave a heavy sigh, and, turning away, leaned on the bulwark and hid his face. "I'm a bad comforter, Tony," said he at last, and speaking with difficulty.

"I didn't mean to have told you, for you have cares enough of your own, but I may as well tell you,—read that." As he spoke, he drew out a letter and handed it to him; and Tony, stooping down beside the binnacle light, read it over twice.

"This is clear and clean beyond me," exclaimed he, as he stood up. "From any other girl I could understand it; but Dolly,—Dolly Stewart, who never broke her word in her life—I never knew her tell a lie as a little child. What can she mean by it?"

"Just what she says there: she thought she could marry me, and she finds she cannot."

"But why?"

"Ah! that's more than she likes to tell me,—more, mayhap, than she'd tell any one."

"Have you any clew to it?"

"None,—not the slightest."

"Is your sister-in-law in it? Has she said or written anything that Dolly could resent?"

"No; don't you mark what she says at the end? 'You must not try to lighten any blame you would lay on me by thinking that any one has influenced me. The fault is all my own. It is I myself have to ask your forgiveness.'"

"Was there any coldness in your late letters? Was there anything that she could construe into change of affection?"

"Nothing,—nothing."

"What will her father say to it?" said Tony, after a pause.

"She's afraid of that herself. You mind the words? 'If I meet forgiveness from you, I shall not from others, and my fault will bear its heavy punishment on a heart that is not too happy.' Poor thing! I do forgive her,—forgive her with all my heart; but it's a great blow, Tony."

"If she was a capricious girl, I could understand it, but that's what she never was."

"No, no; she was true and honest in all things."

"It may be something about her father; he's an old man, and failing. She cannot bear to leave him, perhaps, and it's just possible she couldn't bring herself to say it. Don't you think it might be that?"

"Don't give me a hope, Tony. Don't let me see a glimpse of light, my dear friend, if there's to be no fulfilment after."

The tone of emotion he spoke in made Tony unable to reply for some minutes. "I have no right to say this, it is true," said he, kindly; "but it's the nearest guess I can make: I know, for she told me so herself, she'd not go and be a governess again if she could help it."

"Oh, if you were to be right, Tony! Oh, if it were to be as you suspect, for we could make him come out and live with us here! We've plenty of room, and it would be a pleasure to see him happy, and at rest, after all his long life of labor. Let us read the letter over together, Tony, and see how it agrees with that thought:" and now they both crouched down beside the light and read it over from end to end. Here and there were passages that they pondered over seriously, and some they read twice and even thrice; and although they brought to this task the desire to confirm a speculation, there was that in the tone of the letter that gave little ground for their hope. It was so self-accusing throughout, that it was plain she herself laid no comfort to her own heart in the thought of a high duty fulfilled.

"Are you of the same mind still?" asked M'Gruder, sadly, and with little of hopefulness in his voice; and Tony was silent.

"I see you are not. I see that you cannot give me such a hope."

"Have you answered this yet?"

"Yes, I have written it; but it's not sent off. I kept it by me to read over, and see that there was nothing harsh or cruel,—nothing I would not say in cold blood; for oh, Tony! I will avow it was hard to forgive her; no, I don't mean that, but it was hard to bring myself to believe I had lost her forever. For a while I thought the best thing I could do, was to comfort myself by thinking how false she was, and I took out all her letters, to convince me of her duplicity; but what do you think I found? They all showed me, what I never saw till then, that she was only going to be my wife out of a sort of resignation; that the grief and fretting of her poor father at leaving her penniless in the world was more than she could bear; and that to give him the comfort of his last few days in peace, she'd make any sacrifice; and through all the letters, though I never saw it before, she laid stress on what she called doing her best to make me happy,

but there was no word of being happy herself."

Perhaps Tony did not lay the same stress on this that his friend did; perhaps no explanation of it came readily to his mind; at all events, he made no attempt at comment, and only said,—

"And what will your answer be?"

"What can it be? to release her, of course."

"Ay, but how will you say it?"

"Here's what I have written; it is the fourth attempt, and I don't much like it yet, but I can't do it better." And once more they turned to the light while M'Gruder read out his letter. It was a kind and feeling letter; it contained not one word of reproach, but it said that, into the home he had taken, and where he meant to be so happy, he'd never put foot again. "You ought to have seen it, Tony," said he, with a quiver in his voice. "It was all so neat and comfortable; and the little room that I meant to be Dolly's own, was hung round with prints, and there was a little terrace, with some orange-trees and myrtles, that would grow there all through the winter,—for it was a sheltered spot under the Monte Nero; but it's all over now."

"Don't send off that letter. I mean, let me see her and speak to her before you write. I shall be at home, I hope, by Wednesday, and I'll go over to the Burnside,—or, better still, I'll make my mother ask Dolly to come over to us. Dolly loves her as if she were her own mother, and if any one can influence her, she will be that one."

"But I'd not wish her to come round by persuasion, Tony. Dolly's a girl to have a will of her own, and she's never made up her mind to write me that letter without thinking well over it."

"Perhaps she'll tell my mother her reasons. Perhaps she'll say why she draws back from her promise."

"I don't even know that I'd like to drive her to that; it mightn't be quite fair."

Tony flung away his cigar with impatience; he was irritated, for he bethought him of his own ease, and how it was quite possible no such scruples of delicacy would have interfered with him if he could only have managed to find out what was passing in Alice's mind.

"I'm sure," said M'Gruder, "you agree with me, Tony; and if she says, Don't hold

me to my pledge, I have no right to ask, Why?"

A short shrug of the shoulders was all Tony's answer.

"Not that I'd object to your saying a word for me, Tony, if there was to be any hope from it,—saying what a warm friend could say of one he thought well of. You've been living under the same roof with me, and you know more of my nature and my ways and my temper than most men, and mayhap what you could tell her might have its weight."

"That I know and believe."

"But don't think only of me, Tony. She's more to be considered than I am; and if this bargain were to be unhappy for her, it would only be misery for both of us. You'd not marry your own sweetheart against her own will?"

Tony neither agreed to nor dissented from this remark. The chances were that it was a proposition not so readily solved, and that he'd like to have thought over it.

"No; I know you better than that" said M'Gruder once more.

"Perhaps not," remarked Tony; but the tone certainly gave no positive assurance of a settled determination. "At all events, I'll see what I can do for you."

"If it were that she cares for somebody else that she couldn't marry,—that her father disliked, or that he was too poor,—I'd never say one word; because who can tell what changes may come in life, and the man that couldn't support a wife now, in a year or two may be well off and thriving? And if it were that she really liked another—you don't think that likely? Well, neither do I; but I say it here, because I want to take in every consideration of the question; but I repeat, if it were so, I'd never utter one word against it. Your mother, Tony, is more likely to find that out than any of us; and if she says Dolly's heart is given away already, that will be enough. I'll not trouble or torment her more."

Tony grasped his friend's hand, and shook it warmly, some vague suspicion darting through him at the time that this rag-merchant was more generous in his dealing with the woman he loved than he, Tony, would have been. Was it that he loved less, or was it that his love was more? Tony couldn't tell; nor was it so very easy to resolve it either way.

As day broke, the steamer ran into Leghorn

to land some passengers and take in others; and M'Gruder, while he took leave of Tony, pointed to a red-tiled roof rising amongst some olive-trees,—the quaint little pigeon-house on top surmounted with a weather-vane fashioned into an enormous letter S.

"There it is," said he, with a shake in his voice,—"that was to have been her home. I'll not go near it till I hear from you, and you may tell her so. Tell her you saw it, Tony, and that it was a sweet little spot, where one might look for happiness if they could only bring a quiet heart to it. And above all, Tony, write to me frankly and openly, and don't give me any hopes if your own conscience tells you I have no right to them."

With a strong grasp of the hand, and a long, full look at each other in silence, M'Gruder went over the side to his boat, and the steamer ploughed on her way to Marseilles.

CHAPTER LXI.

TONY AT HOME AGAIN.

THOUGH Tony was eager to persuade Rory to accompany him home, the poor fellow longed so ardently to see his friends and relations, to tell all that he had done and suffered for "the cause," and to show the rank he had won, that Tony yielded at last, and only bound him by a promise to come and pass his Christmas at the Causeway; and now he hastened on night and day, feverishly impatient to see his mother, and yearning for that affection which his heart had never before so thirsted after.

There were times when he felt that, without Alice, all his good fortune in life was valueless; and it was a matter of utter indifference whether he was to see himself surrounded with every means of enjoyment, or rise each morning to meet some call of labor. And then there were times when he thought of the great space that separated them,—not in condition, but in tastes and habits and requirements. She was of that gay and fashionable world that she adorned,—made for it, and made to like it; its admiration and its homage were things she looked for. What would he have done if obliged to live in such a society! His delight was the freedom of an out-of-door existence,—the hard work of field-sports, dashed with a certain danger that gave them their zest. In these he admitted no man to be his superior; and in this very

conscious strength lay the pride that sustained him. Compel him, however, to live in another fashion,—surround him with the responsibilities of station and the demands of certain ceremonies, — and he would be wretched. “ Perhaps she saw all that,” muttered he to himself. “ With that marvellous quickness of hers, who knows if she might not have foreseen how unsuited I was to all habits but my own wayward, careless ones? And though I hope I shall always be a gentleman, in truth there are some forms of the condition that puzzle me sorely.

“ And, after all, have I not my dear mother to look after and make happy? and what a charm it will give to life to see her surrounded with the little objects she loved and cared for! What a garden she shall have! ” Climate and soil, to be sure, were stiff adversaries to conquer, but money and skill could fight them; and that school for the little girls—the fishermen’s daughters—that she was always planning, and always wondering Sir Arthur Lyle had never thought of, she should have it now, and a pretty building, too, it should be. He knew the very spot to suit it, and how beautiful he would make their own little cottage, if his mother should still desire to live there. Not that he thought of this positively with perfect calm and indifference. To live so near the Lyles, and live estranged from them, would be a great source of unpleasantness, and yet how could he possibly renew his relations there, now that all was over between Alice and himself? “ Ah,” thought he at last, “ the world would stand still if it had to wait for stupid fellows like me to solve its difficulties. I must just let events happen, and do the best I can when they confront me: ” and then mother would be there; mother would counsel and advise him; mother would warn him of this and reconcile him to that; and so he was of good cheer as to the future, though there were things in the present that pressed him sorely.

It was about an hour after dark of a starry, sharp October evening, that the jaunting-car on which he travelled drove up to the spot where the little pathway turned off to the cottage, and Jeanie was there with her lantern waiting for him.

“ You’ve no a’ that luggage, Maister Tony? ” cried she, as the man deposited the fourth trunk on the road.

“ How’s my mother? ” asked he, impatiently; “ is she well? ”

“ Why wouldn’t she be weel, and hearty too? ” said the girl, who rather felt the question as savoring of ingratitude, seeing what blessings of fortune had been showered upon them.

As he walked hurriedly along, Jeanie trotted at his side, telling him, in broken and disjointed sentences, the events of the place,—the joy of the whole neighborhood on hearing of his new wealth; their hopes that he might not leave that part of the country; what Mrs. Blackie of Craigs Mills said at Mrs. Dumphy’s christening, when she gave the name of Tony to the baby, and wouldn’t say Anthony; and how Dr. M’Candlish improved the occasion for “ twa good hours, wi’ muir text o’ Scripture than wad make a Sabbath-day’s discourse; and eeh, Maister Tony, it’s a glad heart I’ll hae o’ it all, if I could only think that you’ll no be going to keep a man creature,—a sort of butler like,—there’s no such wastefu’ bodies in the world as they, and wanting mair ceremonies than the best gentlemen in the land.” Before Tony had finished assuring her that no change in the household should displace herself, they had reached the little wicket: his mother, as she stood at the door, caught the sound of his voice, rushed out to meet him, and was soon clasped in his arms.

“ It’s more happiness than I hoped for,—more, far more, ” was all she could say, as she clung to him. Her next words were uttered in a cry of joy, when the light fell full upon him in the doorway, “ You’re just your father, Tony; it’s your own fathor’s self I see standing before me, if you had not so much hair over your face. ”

“ I’ll soon get rid of that, mother, if you dislike it. ”

“ Let it be, Maister Tony,—let it be, ” cried Jeanie; “ though it frightened me a bit at first, it’s no so bad when one gets used to it. ”

Though Mrs. Butler had determined to make Tony relate every event that took place from the day he left her, in regular narrative order, nothing could be less connected, nothing less consecutive, than the incidents he recounted. Now it would be some reminiscence of his messenger days,—of his meeting with that glorious Sir Joseph, who treated

him so handsomely ; then of that villain who stole his despatches ; of his life as a rag-merchant, or his days with Garibaldi. Rory, too, was remembered ; and he related to his mother the pious fraud by which he had transferred to his humble follower the promotion Garibaldi had bestowed upon himself.

" He well deserved it, and more ; he carried me, when I was wounded, through the orchard at Melazzo on his back, and though struck with a bullet himself, never owned he was hit till he fell on the grass beside me,—a grand fellow that, mother, though he never learned to read." And there was a something of irony in his voice as he said this, that showed how the pains of learning still rankled in his mind.

" And you never met the Lyles ? how strange ! " exclaimed she.

" Yes, I met Alice ; at least," said he, stooping down to settle the log on the fire, " I saw her the last evening I was at Naples."

" Tell me all about it."

" There's no all. I met her, we talked together for half an hour or so, and we parted ; there's the whole of it."

" She had heard, I suppose, of your good fortune ? "

" Yes, Skeff had told them the story, and, I take it, made the most of our wealth ; not that rich people like the Lyles would be much impressed by our fortune."

" That may be true, Tony, but rich folk have a sympathy with other rich folk, and they're not very wrong in liking those whose condition resembles their own. What did Alice say ? Did she give you some good advice as to your mode of life ? "

" Yes, plenty of that ; she rather likes advice-giving."

" She was always a good friend of yours, Tony. I mind well when she used to come here to hear your letters read to her. She ever made the same remark : Tony is a fine, true-hearted boy ; and when he's moulded and shaped a bit by the pressure of the world, he'll grow to be a fine, true-hearted man."

" It was very gracious of her, no doubt," said he, with a sharp, short tone ; " and she was good enough to contribute a little to that selfsame ' pressure ' she hoped so much from."

His mother looked at him to explain his

words, but he turned his head away and was silent.

" Tell me something about home, mother. How are the Stewarts ? Where is Dolly ? "

" They are well, and Dolly is here ; and a dear good girl she is. Ah, Tony, if you knew all the comfort she has been to me in your absence,—coming here through sleet and snow and storm, and nursing me like a daughter."

" I liked her better till I learned how she had treated that good-hearted fellow Sam M'Gruder. Do you know how she has behaved to him ? "

" I know it all. I read her letters every one of them."

" And can you mean that you defend her conduct ? "

" I mean that if she were to marry a man she did not love, and were dishonest enough not to tell him so, I'd not attempt to defend her. There's what I mean, Tony."

" Why promise him, then,—why accept him ? "

" She never did."

" Oh ! " exclaimed he, holding up both his hands.

" I know what I say, Tony. It was the doctor that answered the letter in which Mr. M'Gruder proposed for Dolly. He said that he could not, would not, use any influence over his daughter ; but that, from all he had learned of Mr. M'Gruder's character, he would give his free consent to the match."

" Well, then, Dolly said — .

" Wait a bit, I am coming to Dolly. She wrote back that she was sorry he had not first written to herself, and she would frankly have declared she did not wish to marry ; but now, as he had addressed her father,—an old man in failing health, anxious above all things about what was to become of her when he was removed,—the case was a more difficult one, since to refuse his offer was to place herself in opposition to her father's will,—a thing that in all her life had never happened. ' You will see from this,' said she, ' that I could not bring to you that love and affection which would be your right, were I only to marry you to spare my father's anxieties. You ought to have more than this in your wife, and I cannot give you more ; therefore do not persist in this suit, or, at all events, do not press it.' "

"But I remember your writing me word that Dolly was only waiting till I left M'Gruder's house, or quitted the neighborhood, to name the day she would be married. How do you explain that?"

"It was her father forced her to write that letter: his health was failing, and his irritability had increased to that degree that at times we were almost afraid of his reason, Tony; and I mind well the night Dolly came over to show me what she had written. She read it in that chair where you are sitting now, and when she finished, she fell on her knees, and, hiding her face in my lap, she sobbed as if her poor heart were breaking."

"So, in fact, she was always averse to this match?"

"Always. She never got a letter from abroad that I couldn't have told it by her red eyes and swelled eyelids, poor lassie!"

"I say 'poor fellow!' mother; for I declare that the man who marries a woman against her will has the worst of it."

"No, no, Tony; all sorrows fall heaviest on the helpless. When at last the time came that she could bear no more, she rallied her courage and told her father that if she were to marry M'Gruder, it would be the misery of her whole life. He took it very ill at first; he said some very cruel things to her; and, indeed, it was only after seeing how I took the lassie's side, and approved of all she had done, that he yielded and gave way. But he isn't what he used to be, Tony. Old age, they say, makes people sometimes sterner and harder. A grievous thing to think of, that we'd be more worldly just when the world was slipping away beneath us; and so what do you think he does? The same day that Dolly writes that letter to M'Gruder, he makes her write to Dr. M'Candlish to say that she'd take a situation as a governess with a family going to India, which the doctor mentioned was open to any well-qualified young person like herself. 'Ye canna say that your "heart will be broke wi' treachery" here, lassie,' said her father, jeering at what she said in her tears about the marriage."

"You oughtn't to suffer this, mother; you ought to offer Dolly a home here with yourself."

"It was what I was thinking of, Tony; but I didn't like to take any step in it till I saw you and spoke to you."

"Do it, by all means,—do it to-morrow."

"Not to-morrow, Tony, nor even the next day; for Dolly and the doctor left this to pass a few days with the M'Candlishes at Articlave, and they'll not be back before Saturday; but I am so glad that you like the plan,—so glad that it came from yourself too."

"It's the first bit of pleasure our new wealth has given us, mother; may it be a good augury!"

"That's a heathenish word, Tony, and most unsuited to be used in thankfulness for God's blessings."

Tony took the rebuke in good part, and, to change the topic, laughingly asked if she thought Garibaldians never were hungry, for she had said nothing of supper since he came.

"Jeanie has been in three times to tell you it was ready, and the last time she said she'd come no more; but come and we'll see what there's for us."

CHAPTER LXII.

SKEFF DAMER'S LAST "PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL."

AFTER some four or five days passed almost like a dream,—for while he stood in the midst of old familiar objects, all Tony's thoughts as to the future were new and strange,—there came a long letter from Skeff Damer, announcing his approaching marriage with Bella,—the "dear old woman of Tilney" having behaved "beautifully." "Short as the time has been since you left this, my brave Tony, great events have occurred. The king has lost his throne, and Skeff Damer has gained an estate. I would have saved him, for I really like the queen, but that his obstinacy is such, the rescue would have only been a reprove, not a pardon. Sicily I meant for us,—I mean for England,—myself to be the viceroy. The silver mines at Stromboli have never been worked since the time of Tiberius; they contain untold wealth: and as to coral fishery, I have obtained statistics will make your teeth water. I can show you my calculations in hard figures, that in eight years and four months I should be the richest man in Europe,—able to purchase the soil of the island out and out, if the British Government were stupid enough not to see that they ought to establish me and my dynasty there. These are now but visions,—grand and

glorious visions, it is true,—and dearest Bella sheds tears when I allude to them.

"I have had a row with 'the Office'; they blame me for the downfall of the monarchy, but they never told me to save it. To you I may make the confession, it was the two days I passed at Cava cost this Bourbon his crown. Not that I regret, my dear Tony, this tribute to friendship. During that interval, as Carassa expresses it, they were paralyzed. 'Where is Damer?' 'Who has seen Skeff?' 'What has become of him?' 'With whom is he negotiating?' were the questions on every side; and in the very midst of the excitement, back comes the fellow M'Caskey, the little fiery-faced individual you insisted in your raving on calling 'my godfather,' and declares that I am in the camp of the Garibaldians, and making terms and stipulations with the general himself. The queen-mother went off in strong hysterics when she heard it; the king never uttered a word,—has never spoken since,—and the dear queen merely said, 'Damer will never betray us.' These particulars I learned from Francardi. Meanwhile Garibaldi, seeing the immense importance of my presence at his headquarters, pushes on for the capital, and enters Naples, as he gives out, with the concurrence and approval of England! You will, I have no doubt, hear another version of this event. You will be told bushels of lies about heroic daring and frantic popular enthusiasm. To your friendly breast I commit the truth, never to be revealed, however, except to a remote posterity.

"One other confession, and I have done,—done with politics forever. You will hear of Garibaldi as a brave, straightforward, simple-minded, unsuspecting man, hating intrigues of all kinds. This is totally wrong. With all his courage, it is as nothing to his craft. He is the deepest politician, and the most subtle statesman in Europe, and, to my thinking,—mind, it is *my* estimate I give you,—more of Machiavelli than any man of his day. Bear this in mind, and keep your eye on him in future. We had not been five minutes together till each of us read the other. We were the two 'Augurs' of the Latin satirist, and if we didn't laugh, we exchanged a recognition just as significant. I ought to tell you that he is quite frantic at my giving up political life, and he says that my retirement will make Cavour's fortune,

for there is no other man left fit to meet him. There was not a temptation, not a bribe, he did not throw out to induce me to withhold my resignation; and when he found that personal advantages had no weight with me, he said, 'Mind my words, Monsieur Damer; the time will come when you will regret this retirement. When you will see the great continent of Europe convulsed from one end to the other, and yourself no longer in a position to influence the course of events, and guide the popular will, you will bitterly regret this step.' But I know myself better. What could the peerage, what could the garter, what could a seat in the cabinet do for me? I have been too long and too much behind the scenes to be dazzled by the blaze of the 'spectacle.' I want repose, a home, the charms of that domestic life which are denied to the mere man of ambition. Bella, indeed, has her misgivings, that to live without greatness—greatness in action and greatness to come—will be a sore trial to me; but I tell her, as I tell you, my dear friend, that it is exactly the men who, like myself, have moved events, and given the spring to the greatest casualties, who are readiest to accept tranquillity and peace as the first of blessings. Under the shade of my old elms at Tilney,—I may call them mine already, as Reeves and Tucker are drawing out the deeds,—I will write my memoirs,—one of the most interesting contributions, when it appears, that history has received for the last century. I can afford to be fearless, and I will be; and if certain noble lords go down to posterity with tarnished honor and diminished fame, they can date the discovery to the day when they disparaged a Damer.

"Now for a minor key. We led a very jolly life on board the *Talisman*, only needing yourself to make it perfect. My Lady L. was 'out of herself' at your not coming; indeed, since your accession to fortune, she has discovered some very amiable and some especially attractive qualities in your nature, and that, 'if you fall amongst the right people,'—I hope you appreciate the sort of accident intended,—you will become a very superior article. Bella is, as always, a sincere friend; and though Alice says nothing, she does not look ungrateful to him who speaks well of you. Bella has told me in confidence—mind, in confidence—that all is broken off

between Alice and you, and says it is all the better for both ; that you were a pair of intractable tempers, and that the only chance for either of you, is to be allied to somebody or something that would consent to think you perfection, and yet manage you as if you were not what is called ' absolute wisdom.'

" Bella also said, ' Tony might have had some chance with Alice, had he remained poor ; ' the opposition of her family would have had its weight in influencing her in his favor ; but now that he is a prize in the matrimonial lottery, she is quite ready to see any defects he may have, and set them against all that would be said in his behalf. Last of all, she likes her independence as a widow. I half suspected that Maitland had been before you in her favor ; but Bella says not. By the way, it was the fortune that has fallen to you Maitland had always expected, —Sir Omerod having married, or, as some say, not married, his mother, and adopted Maitland, who contrived to spend about eighty thousand of the old man's savings in ten or eleven years. He is a strange fellow, and mysterious to the last. Since the overthrow of the Government, we have been reduced to ask protection to the city from the secret society called the Camorra, a set of Neapolitan Thugs, who cut throats in reciprocity ; and it was by a guard of these wretches that we were escorted to the ship's boats when we embarked. Bella swears that the chief of the gang was no other than Maitland, greatly disguised of course ; but she says that she recognized him by his teeth, as he smiled accidentally. It would be, of course, at the risk of his life he was there, since anything that pertained to the court would, if discovered, be torn to fragments by the people. My ' godfather ' had a narrow escape on Tuesday last. He rode through the Toledo in full uniform, amidst all the people, who were satisfied with hissing him instead of treating him to a stiletto, and the rascal grinned an insolent defiance as he went, and said, as he gained the Piazza, ' You're not such bad *canaille*, after all ; I have seen worse in Mexico.' He went on board a despatch-boat in the bay, and ordered the commander to take him to Gaeta ; and the oddest of all is, the officer complied, overpowered, as better men have been, by the scoundrel's impertinence. Oh, Tony, to *you* —to yourself, to your heart's most secret

closet, fast to be locked, when you have my secret inside of it,—to *you*, I own, that the night I passed in that wretch's company is the darkest page of my existence. He overwhelmed me with insult, and I had to bear it, just as I should have to bear the buffeting of the waves if I had been thrown into the sea. I'd have strangled him then and there if I was able, but the brute would have torn me limb from limb if I attempted it. Time may diminish the acuteness of this suffering, but I confess to you, up to this, when I think of what I went through, my humiliation overpowers me. I hope fervently you may meet him one of these days. You have a little score of your own, I suspect, to settle with him ; at all events, if the day of reckoning comes, include my balance, and trust to my eternal gratitude.

" Here have come Alice and Bella to make me read out what I have written to you ; of course I have objected. This is a strictly ' private and confidential.' What we do for the blue-books, Master Tony, we do in a different fashion. Alice, perhaps, suspects the reasons of my reserve,—' appreciates my reticence,' as we say in the ' Line.'

" At all events, she tells me to make you write to her. ' When Tony,' said she, ' has found out that he was only in love with me because I made him better known to his own heart, and induced him to develop some of his own fine qualities, he'll begin to see that we may and ought to be excellent friends ; and some day or other, when there shall be a Mrs. Tony, if she be a sensible woman, she'll not object to the friendship.' She said this so measuredly and calmly that I can almost trust myself to say I have reported her word for word. It reads to me like a very polite *conge*. What do you say to it ?

" The Lyles are going back at the end of the month, but Alice says she'll winter at Cairo. There is an insolent independence about these widows, Tony, that adds one more terror to death. I protest I'd like to haunt the woman that could employ her freedom of action in this arbitrary manner.

" Dearest Bella insists on your coming to our wedding ; it will come off at Tilney, strictly private. None but our nearest relatives, not even the Duke of Dullechester, nor any of the Howards. They will feel it ; but it can't be helped, I suppose. Cincinnatus had to cut his connections too, when he took to

horticulture. You, however, must not desert me; and if you cannot travel without Rory, bring him with you.

"I am impatient to get away from this, and seek the safety of some obscure retreat; for I know the persecutions I shall be exposed to withdraw my resignation and remain. To this I will never consent. I give it to you under my hand, Tony, and I give it the more formally, as I desire it may be historic. I know well the whining tone they will assume, —just as well as if I saw it before me in a despatch. 'What are we to tell the queen?' will be the cry. My dignified answer will be, 'Tell her that you made it impossible for one of the ablest of her servants to hold his office with dignity. Tell her, too, that Skeff Damer has done enough for honor; he now seeks to do something for happiness.' Back to office again I will not go. Five years and two months of unpaid services have I given to my country, and England is not ashamed to accept the unrewarded labors of her gifted sons! My very 'extraordinaries' have been cavilled at. I give you my word of honor, they have asked me for vouchers for the champagne and lobsters with which I have treated some of the most dangerous regicides of Europe,—men whose language would make your hair stand on end, and whose sentiments actually curdled the blood as one listened to them.

"The elegant hospitalities which I dispensed, in the hope—vain hope!—of inducing them to believe that the social amenities of life had extended to our insular position,—these the Office declares they have nothing to do with, and insolently asks me, 'Are there any other items of my pleasure whose cost I should wish to submit to parliament?'

"Ask Talleyrand, ask Metternich, ask any of our own people,—B. or S. or H.,—since when have cookery and the ballet ceased to be the lawful weapons of diplomacy.

"The day of reckoning for all this, my dear Tony, is coming. At first I thought of making some of my friends in the House move for the correspondence between F. O. and myself,—the Damer papers they would be called, in the language of the public journals,—and thus bring on a smashing debate. Reconsideration, however, showed me that my memoirs, 'Five Years of a Diplomatist on Service,' would be the more fitting place; and in the pages of those volumes you will

find revelations more astounding, official knaveries more nefarious, and political intrigues more Machiavellian, than the wildest imagination for wickedness has ever conceived. What would they not have given rather than see such an exposure! I almost think I will call my book, 'Extraordinaries' of a Diplomatist.' Sensational and taking both, that title! You mustn't be provoked if, in one of the lighter chapters,—there must be light chapters,—I stick in that little adventure of your own with my godfather."

"Confound the fellow!" muttered Tony, and with such a hearty indignation that his mother heard him from the adjoining room, and hastened in to ask who or what had provoked him. Tony blundered out some sort of evasive reply, and then said, "Was it Dr. Stewart's voice I heard without there a few minutes ago?"

"Yes, Tony; he called in as he was passing to Coleraine on important business. The poor man is much agitated by an offer that has just been made him to go far away over the seas, and finish his days, one may call it, at the end of the world. Some of this country folk, it seems, who settled in New Zealand, at a place they call Wellington Gap, have invited him to go out there and minister among them; and though he's not minded to make the change at his advanced time of life, nor disposed to lay his bones in a faraway land, yet for Dolly's sake—poor Dolly, who will be left friendless and homeless when he is taken away—he thinks maybe it's his duty to accept the offer; and so he's gone in to the town to consult Dr. M'Candlish and the elder Mr. M'Elwain, and a few other sensible men."

"Why won't Dolly marry the man she ought to marry,—a good, true-hearted fellow, who will treat her well and be kind to her? Tell me that, mother."

"It mauna be—it mauna be," said the old lady, who, when much moved, frequently employed the Scotch dialect unconsciously.

"Is there a reason for her conduct?"

"There is a reason," said she, firmly.

"And do you know it? Has she told you what it is?"

"I'm not at liberty to talk over this matter with you, Tony. Whatever I know, I know as a thing confided to me in honor."

"I only asked, Was the reason one that you yourself were satisfied with?"

"It was, and is," replied she, gravely. "Do you think, from what you know, that Dolly would listen to any representations I might make her? for I know M'Gruder thoroughly, and can speak of him as a friend likes to speak."

"No, no, Tony—don't do it! don't do it!" cried she, with a degree of emotion that perfectly amazed him, for the tears swam in her eyes, and her lips trembled as she spoke. He stared fixedly at her, but she turned away her head, and for some minutes neither spoke.

"Come, mother," said Tony, at last, and in his kindest voice, "you have a good head of your own,—think of some way to prevent the poor old doctor from going off into exile."

"How could we help him that he would not object to?"

"What if you were to hit upon some plan of adopting Dolly? You have long loved her as if she were your own daughter, and she has returned your affections."

"That she has," muttered the old lady, as she wiped her eyes.

"What use is this new wealth of ours, if it benefit none but ourselves, mother? Just get the doctor to talk it all over with you, and say to him, 'Have no fears as to Dolly; she shall never be forced to marry against her inclinations,—merely for support; her home shall be here with us, and she shall be no dependant neither.' I'll take care of that."

"How like your father you said these words, Tony!" cried she, looking at him with a gaze of love and pride together; "it was his very voice too."

"I meant to have spoken to her on poor M'Gruder's behalf,—I promised him I would, but if you tell me it is of no use"—

"I tell you more, Tony—I tell you it would be cruel; it would be worse than cruel," cried she, eagerly.

"Then I'll not do it, and I'll write to him to-day and say so, though, Heaven knows I'll be sorely puzzled to explain myself; but as he is a true man, he'll feel that I have done all for the best, and that if I have not served his cause, it has not been for any lack of the will!"

"If you wish it, Tony, I could write to Mr. M'Gruder myself. A letter from an old body like me is sometimes a better means to break a misfortune than one from a younger

hand. Age deals more naturally with sorrow, perhaps."

"You will be doing a kind thing, my dear mother," said he, as he drew her towards him, "and to a good fellow who deserves well of us."

"I want to thank him, besides, for his kindness and care of you, Tony; so just write his address for me there on that envelope, and I'll do it at once."

"I'm off for a ramble, mother, till dinner-time," said Tony, taking his hat.

"Are you going up to the Abbey, Tony?"

"No," said he, blushing slightly.

"Because, if you had, I'd have asked you to fetch me some fresh flowers. Dolly is coming to dine with us, and she is so fond of seeing flowers on the centre of the table."

"No; I have nothing to do at the Abbey. I'm off toward Portrush."

"Why not go over to the Burnside and fetch Dolly?" said she, carelessly.

"Perhaps I may—that is, if I should find myself in that quarter; but I'm first of all bent on a profound piece of thoughtfulness or a good smoke,—pretty much the same thing with me, I believe. So good-by for a while."

His mother looked after him with loving eyes till the tears dulled them; but there are tears which fall on the affections as the dew falls on flowers, and these were of that number.

"His own father,—his own father!" muttered she, as she followed the stalwart figure till it was lost in the distance.

CHAPTER LXIII.

AT THE COTTAGE BESIDE THE CAUSEWAY.

I MUST use more discretion as to Mrs. Butler's correspondence than I have employed respecting Skelf Damer's. What she wrote on that morning is not to be recorded here. It will be enough if I say that her letter was not alone a kind one, but that it thoroughly convinced him who read it that her view was wise and true, and that it would be as useless as ungenerous to press Dolly further, or ask for that love which was not hers to give.

It was a rare event with her to have to write a letter. It was not, either, a very easy task; but if she had not the gift of facile expression, she had another still better for her purpose,—an honest nature steadfastly determined to perform a duty. She knew

her subject, too, and treated it with candor, while with delicacy.

While she wrote, Tony strolled along, puffing his cigar or relighting it, for it was always going out, and dreaming away in his own misty fashion over things past, present, and future, till really the actual and the ideal became so thoroughly commingled he could not well distinguish one from the other. He thought—he knew, indeed—he ought to be very happy. All his anxieties as to a career and a livelihood ended, he felt that a very enjoyable existence might lie before him; but somehow,—he hoped he was not ungrateful,—but somehow he was not so perfectly happy as he supposed his good fortune should have made him.

"Perhaps it will come later on; perhaps when I am active and employed; perhaps when I shall have learned to interest myself in the things money brings around a man; perhaps, too, when I can forget,—aye, that was the lesson was hardest of all." All these passing thoughts, a good deal dashed through each other, scarcely contributed to enlighten his faculties; and he rambled on over rocks and yellow strand, up hillsides, and through fern-clad valleys, not in the least mindful of whither he was going.

At last he suddenly halted, and saw he was in the shrubberies of Lyle Abbey, his steps having out of old habit taken the one same path they had followed for many a year. The place was just as he had seen it last. Trees make no marvellous progress in the north of Ireland, and a longer absence than Tony's would leave them just as they were before. All was neat, orderly, and well kept; and the heaps of dried leaves and brushwood ready to be wheeled away stood there as he saw them when he last walked that way with Alice. He was poor then, without a career, or almost a hope of one; and yet was it possible, could it be possible, that he was happier than he now felt? Was it that Love sufficed for all, and that the heart so filled had no room for other thoughts than those of her it worshipped? He certainly had loved her greatly. She—she alone made up that world in which he had lived. Her smile, her step, her laugh, her voice,—ay, there they were, all before him. What a dream it was! Only a dream after all; for she never cared for him. She had led him on to love her, half in caprice, half in a sort of com-

passionate interest for a poor boy,—boy she called him,—to whom a passion for one above him was certain to elevate and exalt him in his own esteem. "Very kind, doubtless," muttered he, "but very cruel too. She might have remembered that this same dream was to have a very rough awaking. I had built nearly every hope upon one, and that one, she well knew, was never to be realized. It might not have been the most gracious way to do it, but I declare it would have been the most merciful, to have treated me as her mother did, who snubbed my pretensions at once. It was all right that I should recognize her superiority over me in a hundred ways; but perhaps she should not have kept it so continually in mind, as a sort of barrier against a warmer feeling for me. I suppose this is the fine-lady view of the matter. This is the theory that young fellows are to be civilized, as they call it, by a passion for a woman who is to amuse herself by their extravagancies, and then ask their gratitude for having deceived them.

"I'll be shot if I am grateful," said he, as he threw his cigar into the pond. "I'm astonished—amazed—now that it's all over" (here his voice shook a little), "that my stupid vanity could have ever led me to think of her, or that I ever mistook that patronizing way she had towards me for more than good-nature. But, I take it, there are scores of fellows who have had the selfsame experiences. Hero's the seat I made for her," muttered he, as he came in front of a rustic bench. For a moment a savage thought crossed him that he would break it in pieces, and throw the fragments into the lake,—a sort of jealous anger lest some day or other she might sit there with "another;" but he restrained himself, and said, "Better not; better let her see that her civilizing process has done something, and that though I have lost my game I can bear my defeat becomingly."

He began to wish that she were there at that moment. Not that he might renew his vows of love, or repledge his affection; but to show her how calm and reasonable—ay, reasonable was her favorite word—he could be; how collectedly he could listen to her, and how composedly reply. He strolled up to the entrance door. It was open. The servants were busy in preparing for the arrival of their masters, who were expected

within the week. All were delighted to see Master Tony again, and the words somehow rather grated on his ears. It was another reminder of that same "boyhood" he bore such a grudge against. "I am going to have a look out of the small drawing-room window, Mrs. Hayles," said he to the house-keeper, cutting short her congratulations, and hurrying up-stairs.

It was true he went up for a view; but not of the coast-line to Fairhead, fine as it was. It was of a full-length portrait of Alice, life-size, by Grant. She was standing beside her horse,—the Arab Tony trained for her. A braid of her hair had fallen, and she was in the act of arranging it, while one hand held up her drooped riding-dress. There was that in the air and attitude that bespoke a certain embarrassment with a sense of humorous enjoyment of the dilemma. A sketch from life, in fact, had given the idea of the picture, and the reality of the incident was unquestionable.

Tony blushed a deep crimson as he looked and muttered, "The very smile she had on when she said good-by. I wonder I never knew her till now."

A favorite myrtle of hers stood in the window: he broke off a sprig of it, and placed it in his button-hole, and then slowly passed down the stairs and out into the lawn. With very sombre thoughts and slow steps he retraced his way to the cottage. He went over to himself much of his past life, and saw it, as very young men will often in such retrospects, far less favorably as regarded himself than it really was. He ought to have done—Heaven knows what. He ought to have been—scores of things which he never was, perhaps never could be. At all events, there was one thing he never should have imagined, that Alice Lyle—she was Alice Lyle always to him—in her treatment of him was ever more closely drawn towards him than the others of her family. "It was simply the mingled kindness and caprice of her nature that made the difference; and if I hadn't been a vain fool I'd have seen it. I see it now, though; I can read it in the very smile she has in her picture. To be sure I have learned a good deal since I was here last; I have outgrown a good many illusions. I once imagined this dwarfed and stunted scrub to be a wood. I fancied the Abbey to be like a royal palace;

and in Sicily a whole battalion of us have bivouacked in a hall that led to suites of rooms without number. If a mere glimpse of the world could reveal such astounding truths, what might not come of a more lengthened experience?"

"How tired and weary you look, Tony!" said his mother, as he threw himself into a chair; "have you overwalked yourself?"

"I suppose so," said he, with a half smile. "In my poorer days I thought nothing of going to the Abbey and back twice—I have done it even thrice—in one day; but perhaps this weight of gold I carry now is too heavy for me."

"I'd like to see you look more grateful for your good fortune, Tony," said she, gravely.

"I'm not ungrateful, mother; but up to this I have not thought much of the matter. I suspect, however, I was never designed for a life of ease and enjoyment. Do you remember what Dr. Stewart said one day, 'You may put a weed in a garden, and dig round it and water it, and it will only grow to be a big weed after all'?"

"I hope better from Tony—far better," said she, sharply. "Have you answered M'Carthy's letter? Have you arranged where you are to meet the lawyers?"

"I have said in Dublin. They couldn't come here, mother; we have no room for them in this crib."

"You must not call it a crib for all that. It sheltered your father once, and he carried a very high head, Tony."

"And for that very reason, dear mother, I'm going to make it our own home henceforth,—without you'd rather go and live in that old manor-house on the Nore; they tell me it is beautiful."

"It was there your father was born, and I long to see it," said she, with emotion. "Who's that coming in at the gate, Tony?"

"It is Dolly," said he, rising, and going to the door to meet her.

"My dear Dolly," cried he, as he embraced her, and kissed her on either cheek; "this brings me back to old times at once."

If it was nothing else, the total change in Tony's appearance abashed her; the bronzed and bearded man, looking many years older than he was, seemed little like the Tony she had seen last; and so she half shrank back

from his embrace, and with a flushed cheek and almost constrained manner, muttered some words of recognition.

"How well you are looking!" said he, staring at her, as she took off her bonnet, "and the nice glossy hair has all grown again, and I vow it is brighter and silkier than ever."

"What's all this flattery about bright een and silky locks I'm listening to?" said the old lady, coming out laughing into the hall.

"It's Master Tony displaying his foreign graces at my expense, ma'am," said Dolly, with a smile.

"Would you have known him again, Dolly? Would you have thought that great hairy creature there was our Tony?"

"I think he is changed,—a good deal changed," said Dolly, without looking at him.

"I didn't quite like it at first; but I'm partly getting used to it now; and though the colonel never wore a beard on his upper lip, Tony's more like him now than ever." The old lady continued to ramble on about the points of resemblance between the father and son, and where certain traits of manner and voice were held in common; and though neither Tony nor Dolly gave much heed to her words, they were equally grateful to her for talking.

"And where's the doctor, Dolly? Are we not to see him at dinner?"

"Not to-day, ma'am; he's gone over to M'Laidlaw's to make some arrangements about this scheme of ours,—the banishment, he calls it."

"And is it possible, Dolly, that he can seriously contemplate such a step?" asked Tony, gravely.

"Yes; and very seriously too."

"And you, Dolly; what do you say to it?"

"I say to it what I have often said to a difficulty, what the old Scotch adage says of 'the stout heart to the stey brae.'"

"And you might have found more comforting words, lassie,—how the winds can be tempered to the shorn lamb," said the old lady, almost rebukingly; and Dolly drooped her head in silence.

"I think it's a bad scheme," said Tony, boldly, and as though not hearing his mother's remark. "For a man at the doctor's age to go to the other end of the globe to live in a

new land, and make new friendships at his time of life, is, I'm sure, a mistake."

"That supposes that we have a choice; but my father thinks we have no choice."

"I cannot see that. I cannot see that what a man has borne for five-and-thirty, or forty years,—he has been that long at the Burnside, I believe, he cannot endure still longer. I must have a talk with him myself over it." And unconsciously—quite unconsciously—Tony uttered the last words with a high-sounding importance, so certain is it that in a man's worldly wealth there is a store of self-confidence that no mere qualities of head or heart can ever supply; and Dolly almost smiled at the assured tone and the confident manner of her former playfellow.

"My father will be glad to see you, Tony—he wants to hear all about your campaigns; he was trying two nights ago to follow you on the map, but it was such a bad one he had to give up the attempt."

"I'll give you mine," cried the old lady, "the map Tony brought over to myself. I'll no just give it, but I'll lend it to you; and there's a cross wherever there was a battle, and a red cross wherever Tony was wounded."

"Pooh, pooh, mother! don't worry Dolly about these things; she'd rather hear of pleasanter themes than battles and battle-fields. And here is one already; Jeanie says, 'dinner.'"

"Where did you find your sprig of myrtle at this time?" asked Dolly, as Tony led her in to dinner.

"I got it at the Abbey. I strolled up there to-day," said he, in a half-confusion.

"Will you have it?"

"No," said she, curtly.

"Neither will I then," cried he, tearing it out of his button-hole and throwing it away.

What a long journey in life can be taken in the few steps from the drawing-room to the dinner-table!

CHAPTER LXIV. THE END.

As Dr. Stewart had many friends to consult and many visits to make,—some of them, as he imagined, farewell ones,—Dolly was persuaded, but not without difficulty, to take up her residence at the cottage till he should be able to return home. And a very pleasant week it was. To the old lady it was al-

most perfect happiness. She had her dear Tony back with her after all his dangers and escapes, safe and sound, and in such spirits as she had never seen him before. Not a cloud, not a shadow, now ever darkened his bright face; all was good-humor, and thoughtful kindness for herself and for Dolly.

And poor Dolly, too, with some anxious cares at her heart,—a load that would have crushed many,—bore up so well that she looked as cheery as the others, and entered into all the plans that Tony formed about his future house and his gardens and his stables, as though many a hundred leagues of ocean were not soon to roll between her and the spots she traced so eagerly on the paper. One evening they sat even later than usual. Tony had induced Dolly, who was very clever with her pencil, to make him a sketch for a little ornamental cottage,—one of those uninhabitable little homesteads, which are immensely suggestive of all the comforts they would utterly fail to realize; and he leaned over her as she drew, and his arm was on the back of her chair, and his face so close at times that it almost touched the braids of the silky hair beside him.

“ You must make a porch there, Dolly; it would be so nice to sit there with that noble view down the glen at one's feet, and three distinct reaches of the Nore visible.”

“ Yes, I'll make a porch; I'll even make you yourself lounging in it. See, it shall be perfect bliss ! ”

“ What does that mean ? ”

“ That means smoke, sir; you are enjoying the heavenly luxury of tobacco, not the less intensely that it obscures the view.”

“ No, Dolly, I'll not have that. If you put me there, don't have me smoking; make me sitting beside you as we are now,—you drawing, and I looking over you.”

“ But I want to be a prophet as well as a painter, Tony. I desire to predict something that will be sure to happen, if you should ever build this cottage.”

“ I swear I will; I'm resolved on it.”

“ Well, then, so sure as you do, and so sure as you sit in that little honeysuckle-covered porch, you'll smoke.”

“ And why not do as I say? Why not make you sketching”—

“ Because I shall not be sketching; because, by the time your cottage is finished, I shall be probably sketching a Maori chief,

or a war-party bivouacking on the Raki-Raki.”

Tony drew away his arm and leaned back in his chair, a sense almost of faintish sickness creeping over him.

“ Here are the dogs, too,” continued she. “ Here is Lance with his great majestic face, and here Gertrude, with her fine pointed nose and piercing eyes, and here's little Spicer as saucy and pert as I can make him without color; for one ought to have a little carmine for the corner of his eye, and a slight tinge to accent the tip of his nose. Shall I add all your ‘ emblems,’ as they call them, and put in the fishing-rods against the wall, and the landing-net, and the guns and pouches ? ”

She went on sketching with inconceivable rapidity, the drawing keeping pace almost with her words.

But Tony no longer took the interest he had done before in the picture, but seemed lost in some deep and difficult reflection.

“ Shall we have a bridge—a mere plank will do—over the river here, Tony? and then this zigzag pathway will be a short way up to the cottage.”

He never heard her words, but arose and left the room. He passed out into the little garden in front of the house, and leaning on the gate, looked out into the dark, still night. Poor Tony! impenetrable as that darkness was, it was not more difficult to peer through than the thick mist that gathered around his thoughts.

“ Is that Tony? ” cried his mother from the doorway.

“ Yes,” said he, moodily, for he wanted to be left to his own thoughts.

“ Come here, Tony, and see what a fine manly letter your friend Mr. M'Gruder writes in answer to mine.”

Tony was at her side in an instant, and almost tore the letter in his eagerness to read it. It was very brief, but well deserved all she had said of it. With a delicacy which perhaps might scarcely have been looked for in a man so educated and brought up, he seemed to appreciate the existence of a secret he had no right to question; and bitterly as the resolve cost him, he declared that he had no longer a claim on Dolly's affection.

“ I scarcely understand him, mother; do you? ” asked Tony.

“ It's not very hard to understand, Tony,”

said she, gravely. "Mr. M'Gruder sees that Dolly Stewart could not have given him her love and affection as a man's wife ought to give, and he would be ashamed to take her without it."

"But why couldn't she? Sam seems to have a sort of suspicion as to the reason, and I cannot guess it."

"If he does suspect, he has the nice feeling of a man of honor, and sees that it is not for one placed as he is to question it."

"If any man were to say to me, 'Read that letter, and tell me what does it infer,' I'd say the writer thought that the girl he wanted to marry liked some one else."

"Well, there's one point placed beyond an inference, Tony; the engagement is ended, and she is free."

"I suppose she is very happy at it."

"Poor Dolly has little heart for happiness just now. It was a little before dinner a note came from the doctor to say that all the friends he had consulted advised him to go out, and were ready and willing to assist him in every way to make the journey. As January is the stormy month in these seas, they all recommended his sailing as soon as he possibly could; and the poor man says, very feelingly, 'To-morrow, mayhap, will be my farewell sermon to those who have sat under me eight-and-forty years.'"

"Why did you not make some proposal like what I spoke of, mother?" asked he, almost peevishly.

"I tried to do it, Tony, but he wouldn't hear of it. He has a pride of his own that is very dangerous to wound, and he stopped me at once, saying, 'I hope I mistake your meaning; but lest I should not, say no more of this for the sake of our old friendship.'"

"I call such pride downright want of feeling. It is neither more nor less than consummate selfishness."

"Don't tell him so, Tony, or maybe you'd fare worse in the argument. He has a wise, deep head, the doctor."

"I wish he had a little heart with it," said Tony, sulkily, and turned again into the garden.

Twice did Jeanie summon him to tea, but he paid no attention to the call; so engrossed, indeed, was he by his thoughts that he even forgot to smoke, and not impossibly the want of his accustomed weed added to his other embarrassments.

"Miss Dolly's for ganging hame, Master Tony," said the maid at last, "and the mistress wants you to go wi' her."

As Tony entered the hall, Dolly was preparing for the road. Coquetry was certainly the least of her accomplishments, and yet there was something that almost verged on it in the hood she wore, instead of a bonnet, lined of some plushy material of a rich cherry color, and forming a frame around her face that set off all her features to the greatest advantage. Never did her eyes look bluer or deeper,—never did the gentle beauty of her face light up with more of brilliancy. Tony never knew with what rapture he was gazing on her till he saw that she was blushing under his fixed stare.

The leave-taking between Mrs. Butler and Dolly was more than usually affectionate; and even after they had separated, the old lady called her back and kissed her again.

"I don't know how mother will bear up after you leave her," muttered Tony, as he walked along at Dolly's side; "she is fonder of you than ever."

Dolly murmured something, but inaudibly.

"For my own part," continued Tony, "I can't believe this step necessary at all. It would be an ineffable disgrace to the whole neighborhood to let one we love and revere as we do him go away in his old age, one may say, to seek his fortune. He belongs to us, and we to him. We have been linked together for years, and I can't bear the thought of our separating."

This was a very long speech for Tony, and he felt almost fatigued when it was finished; but Dolly was silent, and there was no means by which he could guess the effect it had produced upon her.

"As to my mother," continued he, "she'd not care to live here any longer,—I know it. I don't speak of myself, because it's the habit to think I don't care for any one or anything,—that's the estimate people form of me, and I must bear it as I can."

"It's less than just, Tony," said Dolly, gravely.

"Oh, if I am to ask for justice, Dolly, I shall get the worst of it," said he, laughing, but not merrily.

For a while they walked on without a word on either side.

"What a calm night!" said Dolly, "and

how large the stars look! They tell me that in southern latitudes they seem immense."

" You are not sorry to leave this, Dolly?" murmured he, gloomily; " are you?"

A very faint sigh was all her answer.

" I'm sure no one could blame you," he continued. " There is not much to attach any one to the place, except, perhaps, a half-savage like myself, who finds its ruggedness congenial."

" But you will scarcely remain here now, Tony; you'll be more likely to settle at Butler Hall, won't you?"

" Wherever I settle, it sha'n't be here, after you have left it," said he, with energy.

" Sir Arthur Lyle and his family are all coming back in a few days, I hear."

" So they may; it matters little to me, Dolly. Shall I tell you a secret? Take my arm, Dolly,—the path is rough here,—you may as well lean on me. We are not likely to have many more walks together. Oh, dear! if you were as sorry as I am, Dolly, what a sad stroll this would be!"

" What's your secret, Tony?" asked she, in a faint voice.

" Ah! my secret, my secret," said he, ponderingly, " I don't know why I called it a secret,—but here is what I meant. You remember, Dolly, how I used to live up there at the Abbey formerly. It was just like my home. I ordered all the people about just as if they had been my own servants,—and, indeed, they minded my orders more than their master's. The habit grew so strong upon me, of being obeyed and followed, that I suppose I must have forgot my own real condition. I take it, I must have lost sight of who and what I actually was, till one of the sons—a young fellow in the service in India—came back and contrived to let me make the discovery that, though I never knew it, I was really living the life of a dependant. I'll not tell you how this stung me, but it did sting me,—all the more that I believed, I fancied, myself,—don't laugh at me,—but I really imagined I was in love with one of the girls,—Alice. She was Alice Trafford then."

" I had heard of that," said Dolly, in a faint voice.

" Well, she, too, undeceived me,—not exactly as unfeelingly nor as offensively as her brother, but just as explicitly—you know what I mean?"

" No, tell me more clearly," said she, eagerly.

" I don't know how to tell you. It's a long story,—that is to say, I was a long while under a delusion, and she was a long while indulging it. Fine ladies, I'm told, do this sort of thing when they take a caprice into their heads to civilize young barbarians of my stamp."

" That's not the generous way to look at it, Tony."

" I don't want to be generous; the adage says one ought to begin by being just. Skeff—you know whom I mean, Skeff Damer—saw it clearly enough; he warned me about it. And what a clever fellow he is! Would you believe it, Dolly? he actually knew all the time that I was not really in love, when I thought I was. He knew that it was a something made up of romance and ambition and boyish vanity, and that my heart, my real heart, was never in it."

Dolly shook her head, but whether in dissent or in sorrow it was not easy to say.

" Shall I tell you more?" cried Tony, as he drew her arm closer to him, and took her hand in his,—" shall I tell you more, Dolly? Skeff read me as I could not read myself. He said to me, ' Tony, this is no case of love; it is the flattered vanity of a very young fellow to be distinguished not alone by the prettiest, but the most petted woman of society. You,' said he, ' are receiving all the homage paid to her at second-hand.' But more than all this, Dolly, he not merely saw that I was not in love with Alice Trafford, but he saw with whom my heart was bound up, for many and many a year."

" Her sister, her sister Bella," whispered Dolly.

" No, but with yourself, my own, own Dolly," cried he, and turning, and before she could prevent it, he clasped her in his arms, and kissed her passionately.

" Oh, Tony!" said she, sobbing, " you that I trusted, you that I confided in, to treat me thus."

" It is that my heart is bursting, Dolly, with this long, pent-up love, for I now know I have loved you all my life long. Don't be angry with me, my darling Dolly; I'd rather die at your feet than hear an angry word from you. Tell me if you can care for me; oh, tell me, if I strive to be all you could like

and love, that you will not refuse to be my own."

She tried to disengage herself from his arm ; she trembled, heaved a deep sigh, and fell with her head on his shoulder.

" And you are my own," said he, again kissing her ; " and now the wide world has not so happy a heart as mine."

Of those characters of my story who met happiness, it is as well to say no more. A more cunning craftsman than myself has told us that the less we track human life, the more cheerily we shall speak of it. Let us presume, and it is no unfair presumption, that, as Tony's life was surrounded with a liberal share of those gifts which make existence pleasurable, he was neither ungrateful nor unmindful of them. Of Dolly I hope there need be no doubt. " The guid dochter is the best warrant for the guid wife ; " so said her father, and he said truly.

In the diary of a Spanish guerrilla chief, there is mention of a " nobile Inglesi," who met him at Malta, to confer over the possibility of a landing in Calabria, and the chances of a successful rising there. The Spaniard speaks of this man as a person of rank, education, and talents, high in the confidence of the court, and evidently warmly interested in the cause. He was taken prisoner by the Piedmontese troops on the third day after they landed, and, though repeat-

TONY BUTLER.

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edly offered life under conditions it would have been no dishonor to accept, was tried by court-martial and shot.

There is reason to believe that the " nobile Inglesi" was Maitland.

From the window where I write, I can see the promenade on the Pincian Hill, and if my eyes do not deceive me, I can perceive that at times the groups are broken, and the loungers fall back to permit some one to pass. I have called the waiter to explain the curious circumstance, and asked if it be royalty that is so deferentially acknowledged. He smiles, and says, " No. It is the major domo of the palaco exacts the respect you see. He can do what he likes at Rome. Antonelli himself is not greater than the Count M'Caskey."

As some unlettered guide leads the traveller to the verge of a cliff, from which the glorious landscape beneath is visible, and winding river and embowered homestead and swelling plain and far-off mountain are all spread out beneath for the eye to revel over, so do I place you, my valued reader, on that spot from which the future can be seen, and modestly retire, that you may gaze in peace, weaving your own fancies at will, and investing the scene before you with such images and such interests as best benefit it.

My part is done : if I have suggested something for *yours*, it will not be all in vain that I have written " Tony Butler."

VIOLA'S FOLLY.

BY MRS. S. GIBSON FOSTER.

I HOPE I am not actuated by spite in writing this record. I acknowledge that a twinge of indignation took me yesterday as she passed by me, she in her carriage, I upon the pavement, she with her plump gloved hands indolently folded in her lap, I with my poor, lame son beside me, and she cast us an indifferent glance that went coldly sliding over us with no sign of recognition. For I remembered the incident I am about to tell.

Viola was my schoolmate, at an inland seminary principally dependent upon local patronage. Accident, perhaps, more than affinity, had brought us into that peculiar relation of intimate and confidential friendship by which each school girl is disposed to distinguish some other. Comparatively mature in age, and therefore considered trustworthy, we had been permitted to occupy a room at the house of a widow lady residing at some distance from the seminary building. Entering the school simultaneously and unacquainted, the decision of the principal and not our own choice had determined this condition of things.

My partiality for Viola induced much comment and discussion. She was known to be of wealthy family, but this in our younger years passes for little. Most concurred in calling her cold and selfish. Certainly she was never profuse or demonstrative in ex-

pressions of attachment, or, indeed, of feeling of any kind. Delicate, dainty, free from apprehension of rivalry, for she was neither very clever nor ambitious, there was nothing passionate or rude in her demeanor toward any. Perhaps it was the soft and glossy languor of her manner, the well-bred poise and *aplomb* of her deportment, that attracted me towards her, it was so unlike the somewhat hoydenish and extravagant carriage of the gushing misses who surrounded us. And I had never had a sister.

I know I loved her very fondly, both loved and admired her. The hints of worldly wisdom that sometimes escaped her, her opinions upon matters of taste in dress and ornament, her allusions to the usages of society, were to my untaught mind the utterances of an oracle.

I used often to doubt if I repaid her fully by my assistance at her tasks and exercises, for the quiet suggestions she would give me touching the appropriateness of ribbons, the harmony of colors, the effectiveness of a style of coiffure. She was beautiful. I was painfully, girlishly conscious that I was not.

So I loved her. And although it sometimes vexed me when she affably chid my *abandon* and simplicity, still with no less frankness did I make her the recipient of my confidences, wondering meanwhile that she should

assure me that she had none to return. And thus, while she I believed,

"—fingered me, dog-eared me,
As if she had spelled me by the fireside half a life,"

I recognized in her reticence an inscrutable superiority, when others, less envably intimate, saw only vacuity and heartlessness, and sneered accordingly.

"Come, Viola," I eagerly exclaimed, bursting into our room one afternoon in June, "the girls are all going to Black Rock, and are going to walk back by the splendid moonlight this evening. They are waiting for us."

"They need not wait for me then," she replied, with a smile. "The day has been too warm, I am too comfortable here, and this story is too entertaining."

I remembered expressions of impatience that I had overheard as I delayed the party while I should seek my friend, and allusions to her fine-ladyish contempt for their society and amusements, and urged her warmly.

"O, fie you little goose, they do not want me, or I them. No. Excuse me prettily to the girls, Mary, and be as happy as you can. Come, kiss me good-by."

I saw it would be in vain to insist, and complied with her request. As I kissed her, I was startled to find her cheek was wet. But I was eager to be gone. So with no more words I left her, cuddled in the corner of our little sofa, her long, fair lashes drooping over her cheek as she bent over her book.

It was dark in our room when I returned, flushed with exercise and overflowing with a recital of the adventures of our merry excursion.

"Viola!" I called, as I groped in the darkness for a light, "Viola! Are you asleep, or have you taken to sitting in the darkness?"

There was no reply. Viola was gone. My first instinctive feeling was that Viola was in danger, and I must save her. Very vague and shapeless but none the less appalling was this sensation, and I tried to make it yield to many conjectures that I framed to account for her absence. Might she not be visiting in the vicinity? But such was not her habit, and she could hardly have failed to apprise me of such an intention. Accident or illness at home might have induced her parents to send for her unexpectedly. But this could not have been without the knowledge of Mrs. Atwater, and I had just left her in the room below where I had paused long enough to wish her good-night and be smiled at for my

impatience to unbosom myself to my friend. No. Viola had gone and gone secretly. Then I remembered the tear upon her cheek.

Something must be done, must be done by me, done quickly, done quietly. But what? Stunned and bewildered I seated myself where I had last seen her sit, and leaning my face upon my clasping hands tried to gather in my memory some possible clue to the mystery. It was of no use. The sense of loneliness and impotency, and the goading impulse to action, became almost intolerable. I remembered stories I had read of persons compelled to witness but unable to aid those they loved as they were perishing by fire, by drowning, by wild beasts, and compared their anguish with my own. I looked out from the window. The bright June day was succeeded by a dark and starless night. The rising wind moaned piteously. It was very late and my candle was waning. Again I asked myself should I call others to my aid. But beside the hopelessness of success from such means, I shrank from any act that might bring public reproach and scandal upon Viola. I must not do that.

Tired, sick, dispirited, at last I lay down, dressed as I was, upon our little bed, not to sleep, but to try and reflect more thoroughly and calmly. As I did so I touched something on my pillow. What an eager thrill it sent through me. It was a note from Viola.

"Dearest," it said, "before you sleep to-night make a package of some of my plainest clothing, and place it on the stoop in the rear of the house. I am too hurried to do it myself. Keep my other things if you want them, not to remember me by, for I beg you to forget me. You have been very kind and good to me, but we shall not see one another again."

The shock I experienced at this confirmation of my fears showed me how much hope had lingered among them, and thus suddenly dying, it left my heart sick indeed.

But the restless impulse to action forbade me to pause even to deliberate, and my resolution was speedily taken. Discriminating but little, I hastily made up a package from Viola's wardrobe, threw around me a large cloak, the hood of which I drew far over my features, and went down, first locking my door, to the back stoop. The ghastly moon looked out a moment from a rift in the black clouds, and then, like a guilty face shrinking from sight, hid itself again. Leaving the bundle, I secreted myself behind some shrub-

terry in Mrs. Atwater's little garden, and then crouching there waited for events.

Wearily the time crept by. The restive wind made weird sounds among the leaves and branches of the trees. At length a drizzling rain set in, and heightened my discomfort. Still crouching, shuddering at every sound, I waited, waited. I own that there were moments then, when I almost repented that I had not demanded the counsel and assistance of others. But I strove to repress the thought, and to approve my own resolve that, come what might, the good name of my proud and delicate Viola must run no risk of tarnish from me. If she were lost, if horrible shipwreck of fame and life were to be the result of her wild error, let men and women learn first her misbehaviour from another, not from me. I would not be thus disloyal to her I so fondly loved.

With tense, strained nerves I sat there, every faculty absorbed in expectancy, my misery and wretchedness forgotten, until, at last, I believed I heard a step on the walk. It was certainly a heavy foot crunching the gravel, and, peering from my lurking-place, I saw a female figure stealthily grope for the bundle I had made. Without a word I sprang out and grasped her wrist.

"Holy Mother! What is this at all?" she exclaimed, dropping the package and struggling to escape. My grasp upon her arm was steel, and I pressed my other hand upon her mouth.

"Be still, and listen to me," I said in low tones. "I shall not harm you. But you must do as I wish."

Re-assured by a human voice, she turned towards me the broad, bloused face of an Irish servant girl. Calming her still further, and thrusting the trifling contents of my purse into her hand, I finally persuaded her to pick up the bundle and proceed. Of course I accompanied her, notwithstanding her remonstrances.

It was a long and weary walk through ways already heavy with mire, and the monotonous dripping of the rain was incessant. We stopped at what I recognized as an ill-favored and ill-reputed little tavern, standing by itself with no other house in sight. I remembered that the coach that brought me first to Weymouth had stopped there to take up a passenger.

Bidding the girl go at once to the lady who, she said, had sent her on her errand, I followed her to the door of a squalid and wretched-

edly furnished room, which she entered. I looked in and my heart leaped up in joy. There, in hat and shawl, just as she had left the house, sat my delicate Viola. The girl, by my direction, had not closed the door, and I cannot forget the wild look, so mingled of dejection and alarm, that Viola cast toward it.

"Is he—is anybody with you?" she asked.

I could restrain myself no longer. Springing into the room I threw my arms about her. A strange cry, such as might burst from the pallid lips of one, who, hanging over a terrible abyss, feels the strong arms of deliverance around him, and she sank fainting in my embrace. With the awkward assistance of the servant, I at length succeeded in restoring her to consciousness. But how changed. Submissive as an infant to my will, trembling at every murmur, she suffered me to place my cloak around her, and, without remonstrance or explanation, to conduct her out of the house.

Hardly had we crossed the threshold, when a carriage stopped before the house, and I heard a familiar voice impatiently cursing drivers, horses, weather and luck. Viola's agitation was fearful, and she clung to me for support. I drew her hastily aside from the entrance as a man brushed past without observing us. As he passed into an inner room I heard Viola murmur "Thank God," and knew that she was weeping on my shoulder.

Hurriedly we made our escape, and before morning, drenched and exhausted, I had unlocked the door of our little apartment and welcomed Viola home. I made no inquiries. I could not, but silently assisted her to prepare for bed, and fell to sleep clasping her tightly in my arms.

When the long and perilous illness that succeeded my night of exposure and excitement had left me, I learned that the term had closed some days before, and that Viola had gone home not to return again. They told me also, as among the incidents that had occurred during my illness, that our teacher of music had resigned his position unexpectedly, about the time I was taken ill, with the avowed intention of going abroad. It was his voice I had recognized.

It was years before I saw Viola again, not until we were both wives and mothers, and I a widow. I have not met her otherwise than as yesterday, nor has the supercilious glance she gives me ever wavered. Yet I believe she knows me.

WHETHER IT PAID.: CHAPTER I.

Townsend, Virginia F

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pg. 253

WHETHER IT PAID.

BY VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND.

CHAPTER I.

"And so we are now really rich folks! Just to think of it," said the first voice, a young, eager, feminine one, pendulous betwixt wonder and exultation.

"I tell you though, boys, wont it be fun to spread ourselves on lunches at the Astor and Dehnonico's," said the second voice, with a certain gruffness all through it, and a chuckle through the gruffness.

"Yes, father," subjoined Mrs. Spencer, more from that habit of admonition which is apt to discover itself in the mother of a large family, than from any lack of sympathy with, or appreciation of the good fortune which had fallen so suddenly into the lap of this family. "You'll have to keep a sharp look out, or your boys and girls'll make the money fly faster than you can bring it in. It's my opinion that they'd use up a mint in a short time, if they was free to get at it."

Mrs. Spencer's voice, about on a level with its sentiments and general style of expression, was a fair interpretation of the woman herself, a well-meaning, tolerably kind-hearted one, bound up in a good many prejudices, with no great force of character, and a narrow range of living and feeling, and a good deal of unconscious selfishness.

Whatsoever virtues she possessed, flourished in her domestic atmosphere, for she was a devoted wife and mother, but she had not sympathies of heart or intellect wide enough to grasp much outside of that.

"I expect," said Tom, whose years divided equally the interval betwixt his second sister and third brother, "she'll keep the old bag of coppers in a corner of the cupboard, and expect we'll go to her regularly for our allowance of three cents on training days to invest in gingerbread, molasses candy, and peanuts."

There was a general chorus of laughs among the boys, showing that Tom's wit at his mother's expense was highly appreciated.

Andrew, the eldest of the brothers, slapped the other approvingly on the back, and said— "That's jolly," which adjective expressed with him a high sense of satisfaction, and then Tom was universally regarded as the wit of the family.

"Boys! boys!" said the head of the house-

hold, standing with his back to the fire, and his hands behind him. He was in such an immensely good humor to-night, that it was impossible for him to put anything more than a mild flavor of objurgation in these monosyllables.

There he stood, in his small back parlor, a well enough looking man, somewhat stout but alert withal, good strong features, and gray eyes, in which there was a shrewd twinkle, and dark hair glazed with gray, for the owner was a little this side or the other of his half century.

Ella, the second daughter, and first speaker, had expressed in those words, "To think we are really rich people!" the feeling that was uppermost in the mind of John Spencer, and each member of his family. It carried with it an entirely new sensation. No wonder they were a little dizzy and dazzled.

"It seems, somehow, too sudden and strange to be true, just like a beautiful dream that one loses sight of the first moment one wakes in the morning, or like those foolish, dear, delightful, old 'Arabian Nights,' with Aladdin's lamp moving through all. I used to draw a long breath, squatted down with my book on my knees, before the fire-place in the old house, and rub my eyes hard, and the beautiful visions would all vanish, and there was nothing but the great black chimney, and the crane with the hooks on it. Wont this grand fortune of ours do the same, pa?"

I think if "one who was born blind," or any keen interpreter of the meaning and spirit of voices had listened to each of the family's, he would have chosen this as the one that suited him best. A young voice, like the first speaker's, and with some general likeness of tone betwixt them, clear, animated, but with a certain steadiness and sweetness, which gave it an individuality of its own amongst the others.

"I fancy not, my daughter." This expression was the tenderest in which Mr. Spencer ever indulged, the highest development in speech, at least, of his parental feeling. "I should be likely to see that there was something more solid than the lamp of a—what-you-call-em, at the bottom of my enterprises!" rubbing his hands with a pleasant accession of self-

importance, and a very imperfect comprehension of his daughter's allusion.

"But Aladdin's lamp wasn't so much out of the way after all, for your enterprises have a decidedly 'oily' foundation, father!" interposed here the wit of the family.

There was a laugh now, in which every one joined, for they were all in a humor to enjoy any jest on the one topic which swallowed all critical respecting the quality of the wit. As these people are all assembled in family claque, and are in that absolute freedom of speech and manner which best reveals one's individuality—there is no better time than the present to introduce them to you.

Mr. John Spencer is the generic success of the nineteenth century. He began life as a common chore boy on a farm, coming of poor but honest, homely stock. His ambition never took kindly to farm work, though he owed to that his stubbornly healthful constitution. He married his wife, a fresh, comely country girl, with no more fortune than himself, but both were industrious and prudent, and John Spencer managed with the toil of his hands to make a little home of his own, and here his six boys and girls were born to him with one or two years ranging betwixt their ages.

After a while he sold his small farm, invested his little fortune in a dry goods and grocery store in a neighboring town, and the next ten or twelve years was a sharp struggle with him to meet the requirements of his growing family, and gradually enlarge his stock of goods.

At last he grew sick of such a "one horse concern," as he inelegantly termed his business, sold out, and came to the city to try his fortunes. It was a dangerous experiment for a man in his forties, and with so many young mouths depending upon him for bread. He tried several sorts of business, agencies, clerkships, and the like, and could only, as Mrs. Spencer was forever assuring her children, "keep his head above water."

In the luckiest hour of his life, however, as he esteemed it, he was induced to take a number of acres of land in Pennsylvania, which a business acquaintance let him have "for a mere song," as the former was anxious to go west. When, however, several years more went by and nobody took the acres, Mr. John Spencer thought that he had made a poor investment even at the low price at which he obtained them, and fretted over the two or three hundred dollars that were buried in the land.

But one day petroleum oil was discovered on a creek in the very midst of these acres. That discovery sent up the land in a few days a thousand fold. Experiments proved it fine boring territory. A company was organized immediately. It was as though a wind had wasted suddenly vast treasures to the feet of John Spencer. In less than three weeks after the petroleum was discovered on the "Pennsylvania farm," he disposed of it for two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. That was several years ago, and the oil speculation had not yet reached its climacteric. If he had waited a couple later, he would probably have realized half a million from the sale of his

"piece of land," as he had begun rather temptuously to term it. And so on the evening of the day in which the sale had transpired, Mr. Spencer, a good deal excited and dizzy with his sudden elevation, stood in the midst of the family, who had been informed from the beginning of the successive steps of his good fortune. His wife, a blooming matron, sat near him with her knitting lying in her lap, quite too much excited this evening for even such play-work as finishing off a mitten. Her features still retained something of the comely freshness which attracted her husband in the days when he drove the cows every night to her father's barn-yard; and her dark abundant hair, which was the vanity of her girlhood, did not necessitate a cap yet, though it was slightly sanded with gray, as in September mornings are grasses through which light frosts have crept.

The boys and girls muster in equal force, half a dozen in all; the former in different periods of adolescence—hearty, healthy, with heads that promise well under the right kind of direction, but with a coarseness of speech and manner, a sort of "Young America" assertion, which, disagreeable as it was, would, one charitably hoped, be outgrown with completed manhood. There was no doubt that all these were bright and capable youths, and each one promised to share in the general good looks of the family.

Agnes, the youngest of the girls, was just outside her fifteenth birth-day. Jerusha, the eldest, was almost twenty-one; and Ella was eighteen, with her brother Andrew a year her senior; as Guy was of his sister Agnes, while Thomas was in the middle of his teens; and the whole family from the father down had a tendency to look less than its years. Ella was supposed to be rather the beauty of the family. She had more bloom than

either the eldest or the youngest sister, and her mother's features and brilliant eyes. She had a good deal of outward brightness and swift perception, and a certain peremptoriness of manner which always demanded as a right something which others conceded to it.

Agnes, in some sense, the pet of the family, was pretty much her mother over again, with larger opportunities, both social and educational, and with somewhat more emphasis of character.

Jerusha, the eldest girl, had been named in memory of her grandmother, but partly because the first syllable gave it so old-fashioned a sound, and partly because of indolence it had been elided, and she was universally known in the family, and out of it, as "Rusha," the name at least, having the merit of not being common. She had a clear, pale complexion, eyes of a dark, grayish brown, which held, at times, luminous depths, and the mouth would have been too large had it not been for its vivid color. This girl was not like any of her brothers and sisters. Faults and weaknesses she had like all the others, and the atmosphere of her home, the daily tone and spirit of the household, was not one to stimulate her finest and best possibilities. But she had deeper enthusiasms, finer sensibilities and intuitions, loftier appreciations and ideals than any of the others. Her intellect was of a finer, higher order than any other member of the family's, the eldest daughter being a little of a "blue stocking" or a little romantic, or both.

"And now, pa," said Ella, in her bright, peremptory way, "what are you going to do with all this money?"

"Oh, I presume that I shall find ways to employ it," trying to appear dignified, and succeeding in being important and pompous.

"But people will expect something of us now, you know, pa, very different from what we have been."

"Of course they will, pa," chimed in Agnes, who was rocking backwards and forwards in her low rocking-chair. "We must make a show with it!"

"That's it, put the thing pat," interposed Guy, the youngest of the brothers.

"What sort of a show, then?" asked Mr. Spencer, looking round pleasant and patronizing upon his assembled household.

Ella undertook to explain. "Agnes is right, pa. It wont do for us to live in this miserable hand to mouth way any longer."

And the speaker looked around the family sitting-room, with its neat and comfortable,

but by no means elegant furniture, with eyes that the new fortune had greatly enlightened as to its shabbiness.

"We must have a new house up town, or on Fifth Avenue, and it must be furnished in the latest style, with velvet carpets, and tall mirrors, and rosewood furniture, and all that sort of thing. In short," waxing energetic as she proceeded, "everybody will hear that you have suddenly become a nabob, and I think we'd better cut a rush at the beginning—don't you, Rusha?"

"Ye-es," answered the elder sister, her imagination revelling after the fashion of youth in a dazzling perspective of splendor and luxury, and yet not quite enjoying the way in which Ella had "put" their transition from one life to another.

"And I'll cut old Holmes and his counter from this hour," stoutly asseverated Guy, who was errand boy in a grocery store, as he rose up and strutted about the room with a great accession of importance, beginning to realize the fact that he was now a rich man's son.

"And pictures, and a library, and a conservatory—oh, pa, will it not be our Aladdin's palace after all!" It was Rusha spoke again, the young, eager, delighted voice, just as much rapt up in the dazzling visions that this wealth conjured as any of the others, only seeking its chief enjoyment on somewhat higher levels than they.

"The sooner we are out of this life the better," continued Ella. "How I shall enjoy seeing some of our neighbors stare, only, of course, we must drop our old intimacies. It will never do to carry them into the best society, which, of course, will open its doors to us now."

"But must I give up Gracie Thorp too, sister?" interposed Agnes, with a faint little note of regret in her voice, as though this sacrifice of her friendship to her fortunes was a side of the picture that she had not before contemplated.

"No, indeed," said Rusha, fervently, "be loyal to your one friendship, even if your father has made a fortune."

"Ella will be the one that'll put on airs. Wont she spread it on thick, though, boys?" laughed Andrew.

His sister was quite equal to defending herself, and begged him to remember that whatever he had been he was to turn over a new leaf now.

"And do let a fellow come in for his share," said Guy, the youngest of the brothers. "I

move that we keep horses, not merely for the girls to go shopping and make calls with, but let us fellows show you what horseback riding is."

driver too, with a black band round his hat, and one of those odd cloaks with the funny little capes like deep ruffles!"

"I expect," said his father, who enjoyed his children's "nonsense," as he called it to them, because it served in some sense to give tangibility to his wealth, "that Guy will be the fast young man of the family."

Tom insisted that he was going to see something of the world. Everything in New York had got to be an old story to him.

"Perhaps we'll go to Europe one of these days—oh, Tom!" exclaimed Rusha, with that indrawn breath of hers that was her strongest exclamation point of enjoyment, "what must it be to feast one's self on its treasures of art, to see Mont Blanc, and sail down the Mediterranean, and wander among the ruins of old Rome, and enrich one's whole soul with a sight of that old world that would be new to us?"

"And then," interposed Ella, "it's extremely fashionable to go abroad. 'When I was in Paris,' has a distinguished sound," and she poised that pretty head of hers in a way that would have been amusing if it had not been sad also.

"There, boys, didn't I tell you so? Just see the airs now!" said Andrew, with a chuckle, hitting his brother Tom under the ribs.

Ella turned on him this time with a good deal of vehemence, and she did not confine her expostulations to himself, but made it include the trio of brothers.

"I do hope you'll remember, all of you boys, to make some improvement in your manners, and leave your vulgar slang phrases behind you with your poverty. Do, if it's possible, try and be gentlemen."

"I intend to be my own master," replied Tom, "gentleman or no gentleman. It'll be fun not to have old Jerome scolding and cussing because I haven't got the office fire going in time. Nothing to do now."

"Boys," said Rusha, "your education has been neglected, you know. Now I think you'd better go to work the first thing and improve yourselves—prepare for college, for instance."

"Time enough to think about that next year," added Andrew. "After a fellow's been a slave all his life, he likes to have a little taste of laziness and fun."

"That's so," fervently endorsed Tom.

"And, pa," piped up Agnes, "shall we really have a carriage and horses to ride up to Stewart's and out to Central Park, and a

"Of course we shall," said Ella, without waiting for the paternal affirmative. "And, pa, now you've got the money, the sooner you get out of this place the better," with a gesture expressive of unutterable contempt at the room and its appointments. "I really want to know what it will be to live in a grand house, and keep a carriage, and have servants to wait upon one, and plenty of money to spend."

"So do I, quite as much as you, Ella," said the elder sister's voice, with a little natural quaver of gravity in it. Rusha was always in earnest about whatever she said. "Only I want we should take our new life upon us with grace and dignity, and not have people to whom riches is no novelty quietly sneer about us as mushroom aristocracy. Don't let us make ourselves ridiculous in any way."

"Of course not, Rusha. But I've no doubt that there will be plenty of 'sour grapes' talk about us. However, I think I can stand my ground," looking defiant and self-assertive.

"But," interposed Mrs. Spencer at last, for the juvenile portion of the family had monopolized all the talk during the last hour, while the elders had listened in a kind of half-pleased, half-bewildered acquiescence to the

plans and visions of the future. "But you know I haven't been used to this sort of style that you talk about, and I couldn't know how to preside at dinner parties, and give *swarees*—don't you call them, Rusha? I should make a *balk* of it."

"Oh, ma, those things will come in natural enough, don't be alarmed," said Ella, comforting and patronizing.

"I saw a book on etiquette down town at a stand: I'll bring it home for the edification of the family; we'll all take turns studying it," said Andrew, getting up and stretching his limbs.

"I say, boys, who'll be the lady of the family?" This question was from Guy, surveying his trio of sisters critically.

"Our Ella will carry it off with a high hand. Wont she sail round, though, under diamonds, and feathers, and a rustle of silk?—whew!" added Andrew, this closing monosyllable giving tenfold emphasis to what went before.

"But," said Tom, with whom his elder sister was a favorite, "after all, Rusha'll be the real genuine article, boys. She wont have so

many airs and flourishes, maybe ; but somehow the big house, and the carriage, and all those things 'll seem to come natural to her, just as if she'd been used to 'em all her life—see, now, if I aint right!"

Tom had his reward, although it did not come with any words ; but Rusha turned and looked at him with such a grateful appreciation of a compliment, whose flattering delicacy he himself only half comprehended, filling with a warm, luminous light those gray-brown eyes of hers, that Tom felt doubly fortified in his opinion.

Ella looked the least bit aggrieved. " See if I don't do credit to my new home when I get there!" she said.

And in a certain and outward sense, she would. There was a great deal of adaption about the girl, and she had that quick perception and self-reliance which would avail her vastly in her new position and circumstances.

" When we get there," duplicated Andrew—" that's the rub ; the governor hasn't promised to get the big house yet."

" Oh, but you will, pa ! you wont disgrace your family by keeping us in this horrible hole any longer, now you've got the money to put us in a decent one !"

" Why, you said that it was a really charming house when we moved up here last spring from the old place," answered Mr. Spencer, without any definite intention of denying his daughter's request, but only because it gave him a pleasant sense of power, to be appealed to on so large a scale.

" But we were poor folks then. Don't you see the difference, pa ?"

" I should think he ought to, after the way his boys and girls have gone on to-night," interposed Mrs. Spencer.

" Oh, well, mother, let 'em alone. You and I were young folks once, and built our castles, too," rubbing his hands briskly together, as John Spencer never did, except when he was in his highest mood of good-nature.

" But, pa, we must have the house, you know ; our hearts are all set upon that." It was Rusha speaking here.

" Well, I'll see, if I have time, about hunting up some real estate broker to-morrow. One of your big houses up town will make a hole in the money, and your father isn't worth a mint."

" Yes, but he is worth two hundred and fifty thousand. Just think of it!"

Ella's figures sounded very large and ex-

tremely pleasant in the ears of all her family, and her father evidently considered them a convincing argument, for he made no reply, and they all knew that the " house up town" was gained.

Mrs. Spencer drew a long sigh. " I must say, one thing 'll seem good to me," she said, in a tone of mild gratification—" I shant have to spend all my Saturdays darnin' stockings. I've dreaded for years to see 'em come in from the wash. Growin' boys are so hard on heels and toes."

There was a chorus of shouts. " If I was in Japan, now," said Ella, " I should know that speech came from ma. That's her greatest source of delight in our new fortune."

" And do you remember, ma," said Rusha, " the old silk you had turned and dyed for me when I was sixteen ? It was your wedding-dress ; and how proud I was of it, for it was my first silk. If we could only have looked forwards to this time ! But I wonder if I shall ever be prouder and happier, in the new, elegant dresses I expect to have, than I was in that old one ?"

It was Rusha's words and sentiments which always struck the highest or tenderest chords in the family heart. A little tremulousness went over the mother's face at this allusion ; then the tears came. " Ah, John !" she said, with a sort of long sob betwixt all the words— " do you remember that night we were married, and how my father surprised and overjoyed us both by putting a purse in my hand with a hundred dollars in it, to set us up in housekeeping ?—and with what you had to add to it, it made the little home down there by the green, look real snug ? We had happy times then. I wonder if they 'll be better in the big house we're to have ?"

They were all touched, softened more or less by the mother's words. A new expression came over the father's hard, shrewd face. " Well, Lydia," he said softly and kindly, " we've had a good many years of hard pulling, and we've known some pretty tight places together ; it's only fair you and I should have a little comfort at last."

I think any wise, true soul, who estimated life and the things that belong to it at their real value, would have been unspeakably saddened at the spirit in which this household received the riches which had so suddenly fallen into their possession. A thing to take delight in, to rejoice over, most certainly, but also to make one grateful and humble as before God.

But here there was no thought of Him in all the new joy and exultation—no sense of vastly increased responsibilities—of talents given, to be required again; no entering into the solemn depths and meanings of those words—“Mine own, with usury!”

The spirit in which this household received its new gift was utterly of the earth, earthly. The living in a fine house, the “making a show,” the new importance which it should give them among men and women, was their chiefest thought and delight, which was weak and vulgar enough at the best, and at the worst, was selfishness and sin.

Alas, for those boys, coming up into manhood!—alas, for those girls, in the blossoming of girl and womanhood, with the new power and the new influences for good thrown suddenly into their unused hands, and with no thought beyond the pleasures, and luxuries, and idlenesses in which it should indulge them.

If John Spencer, the “oil speculator,” the man whom they said on “Change” had done a “big thing,” had gathered his family about him that night, and thanked God for this new wealth, and while he rejoiced in all that it would open of comfort and beauty to him and his wife and his children, still consecrated it with prayer and praise, and with a desire to make of it perpetually a thank offering to the Giver by seeking to do good with it “as he found opportunity,” how different it would all have been! But seeing of how low, and coarse, and material a sort was the spirit in which the Spencers took their wealth, and the use they intended to make of it, one could not but wonder whether the money would prove a blessing or a curse to them.

Rusha presented the brightest feature in the picture. In almost every speech of hers that evening was manifested a finer and loftier spirit than in the others. No doubt there were generous impulses and higher feelings that might in her develop themselves in useful and beautiful forms; but perhaps she would never find any greater enjoyment in this wealth than in the new conditions of art, the new forms of intellectual and aesthetic cultivation, in which she could now indulge.

This was all right, certainly, and vastly more commendable, than the mere sensuous gratifications and petty ambitions in which her brothers and sisters took delight. But would Rusha’s influence end there? Had she, with all her finer feelings and deeper enthusiasms, strong convictions enough to with-

stand the general influences of her family, and of the social atmosphere about her? She was young, impulsive, full of faults and weaknesses, and her early training had never stimulated or braced the highest qualities of the girl. Was it not probable that in the pride and glamor of the new life she too would become a weak, selfish, fashionable woman? And for those boys, with their years running through their teens, one trembled for them. It was at just the most dangerous time of their lives that the money had fallen to them; temptation and allurement of every sort would now open to their youth, and there was in their father’s house no safeguard of prayer, no God in all their thoughts. And yet John Spencer, secretly believed himself full as good, or a little better than most men. In a general way, and after the fashion of the world, he was honest in all his dealings, and meant to do right; and alas! how many of those successful oil speculators, who have reaped harvests of fortunes during the last years, were better or wiser than this man or his household? Are not both typical?

CHAPTER II.

“We have had new neighbors during your absence, Fletcher,” said the young lady, passing her brother his second cup of coffee, just replenished from a costly but old-fashioned service—so much of the latter as to give it a certain sacredness of family tradition and association.

“Neighbors, Angeline! What a flavor of the country, and of homely, primitive ways and times that word has! I thought it had grown obsolete here in New York.”

“I believe you are right; I used the word for want of a better.”

“And in which house are these new ‘neighbors’ of ours domiciled?”

“In the brown-stone one, almost directly opposite.”

“Who and what are they?”

“Mushroom aristocracy,” answered the other lady, who sat at the table, and who was both sensible and satirical.

The lady behind the coffee-urn smiled. “It’s true, Fletcher, as Sicily’s severest irony always is. The head of the family has made a fortune in some lucky oil speculation, and it’s quite apparent from various indications that the first article of their faith in money is to make a display with it. These do on all occasions. They keep a carriage, and a groom, and porter, and all that sort of thing;

but all this sets on them with an air of freshness."

"You and Sicily must have observed them narrowly."

"How can one help it," said the last-named sister, "when one lives opposite? And then it's sort of refreshing to see these people, and how they carry the new fortune."

"It must take away one's breath a little, this stepping at once into riches; but after all, one can bear it well enough, if the head be sound, and above all, if the heart be good."

"I'm afraid," said Sicily, without any irony this time, "that there's a little weakness in both, in the case of the people opposite. The mother, a good-looking matron on the whole, but a little dowdy and overdressed, gets into her carriage every morning with an air of self-consciousness that would not be possible with a lady who had kept a carriage and a groom all her life. The father is a stout man, a little beyond his prime, with a shrewd, business sort of a face, and a little pompousness of gait that I fancy is an accessory of his fortune. Then there are several boys, that smoke cigars and swing ornamental canes with a flourish, and I think bid fair to become fast young men, although they only look now like stout, growing boys, dressed in very fine broadcloth, and taking on airs."

"The right sort of experience will take all that out of them. However, it's the most dangerous period of their lives to tide them over," answered the young man, speaking more to himself than to his sisters.

"In a different way, it is hardly less so for the girls, I think," replied the lady at the urn, folding her napkin.

"There are girls, then?"

"Yes; young, blooming, pretty; I've made out three of them, who usually go out with mamma. The youngest is a little girl still, with a face after her mother's pattern, adding somewhat more of force and refinement, and the others are in the early blossom of womanhood, neither out of their teens, I should think—pretty, showy girls, with a slightly newly-fledged air about them, and who doubtless will spend papa's money, and be the finest illustration in dress and manners of his new wealth."

"Fletcher," said the elder sister, with that faint little smile of hers, "doesn't this breakfast-talk of ours sound very much like gossip?"

"I was about to remark that you must have established a very persistent espionage from

your chamber windows, to be so well enlightened with regard to the characters and habits of your neighbors."

"Now, Fletcher, who is ironical?" said the elder sister, with a little pout which sat prettily on the red bloom of her lips.

"Was it I, or the truth, that made the irony, sis? But an interest in others may have its rise in some of the kindest feelings of our nature, and whether this talk of ours is gossip, depends upon several things—the spirit in which it goes on, and to whom it is addressed."

"And then, how can one live opposite people for five months, as we have, and have daily glimpses of them, without reaching some conclusions regarding their breeding, characters, and so on?"

"Quite true, Sicily; and people who have made fortunes of a sudden, and ascended from comparative poverty into riches, are interesting. One likes to watch the individualities crop out, to observe how they carry their wealth, and in what ways and to what extent their fortunes improve them. And with our peculiar national development and the new avenues of enterprise here laid open to all men, our American people are on every hand jumping into fortunes. How will these men who have made their 'pile,' how will their wives, and sons and daughters use this new power placed in their hands, is a question which has vast meanings and relations. Will they, as a class, do any good with their wealth? Will they make a thank-offering to God of any portion of it? Will it make them stronger, nobler, better men and women because their spheres of influence are so much enlarged—because they touch life on so many

sides? Or will the voice of their soul be the old one—'I will pull down my barns and build greater?'" He murmured over the last words to himself, as he pushed back his chair from the table.

These three comprised, with a couple of domestics, the family of Fletcher Rochford. He was at this time at least thirty-three years old, a physician, a man of fine talents, of wide and varied cultivation, for he had had large opportunities of study and travel. His fa-

ther, widely engaged in commercial transactions, had been regarded as a rich man in his day, although he could hardly have been so in the present one; but he was a liberal and intelligent man, and spared no expense in the cultivation of his sons and daughters.

Mrs. Rochford was a woman of peculiar

graces of character, but she died before her son had graduated, although she lived long enough to impart the lasting influences of her fine and forcible character to all her children, and each one would have been different without just such a mother.

After he had studied his profession, the young physician went abroad, and was summoned home the third year by the sudden death of his father.

And from that time, Fletcher Rochford had in some sense taken the place of his parent to his sisters. There had always existed among the members of this family a singularly deep and beautiful tenderness, and as they could not endure the prospect of separation, and as the brother's profession made it almost a necessity that he should not locate in the old county town of his birth, the young people removed to New York.

Dr. Rochford was ardently attached to his profession, especially to certain branches of surgery, and his skill in these afforded him a practice almost unparalleled in the case of so young a man. At the close of his fifth year in New York, he again visited Europe, and was absent somewhat less than a year, engaged in investigations and discoveries more or less intimately connected with his profession, and the talk at the breakfast-table, just related, transpired on the third morning after Dr. Rochford's return.

His sisters Angeline and Sicily had only a faint family likeness to each other. Angeline was seven and Sicily nine years their brother's junior. Natural intelligence and high cultivation made them ornaments of any circles in which they moved. Both had the fine family features, with the bright eyes and delicate bloom of the lips. Angeline's eyes were, however, like her brother's, of a gray, luminous brown, and Sicily had her father's keen blue ones.

The sisters differed, too, in character. Nobody would be likely to know either well without loving her. Angeline's was a strong, sweet, serene, womanly nature; Sicily was bright, impulsive, with a natural gift for satire that her kindly heart tried to discipline, and that played harmless as heat lightning usually about her talk.

Both of the sisters were eminently fitted to adorn society, for to their cultivation and varied accomplishments they united social gifts of no ordinary kind. But they both had, too, their mother's home tastes, and found beneath their own roof their highest satisfa-

tions. Books and art in various forms absorbed much of their time. And then they were the dispensers of a large amount of unobtrusive charities—charity of that sort which requires personal cognizance of its beneficiaries, and which therefore goes the farthest and is the most helpful.

So, to a large degree, both of the young ladies abjured fashionable society, but they had an inner circle of friends of the best sort—men and women earnest, cultivated, of real worth of heart and mind.

I have not left Fletcher Rochford to the last because I regarded him as the least important member of the family. Neither inside of it, where his word was law, nor in the world where he moved in varied relations among men and women, was he so estimated. As for his sisters, they both regarded him with a sort of idolatrous affection; indeed, few brothers had been to them what this one had in care and tenderness since the day of their father's death.

In person he was rather tall, slender-limbed, of large, aquiline features, a strong, bright, manly face, but very far from a handsome one. Near-sighted, he was in the habit of wearing spectacles, through which one only caught occasionally the flash of those gray, dark eyes. The general habit of Fletcher Rochford's face was grave; but his smile, if it once came, entered your heart like sunlight. Naturally

of a fiery temper, and he said of a domineering and exacting spirit, these qualities had been modified and sweetened by deep Christian convictions and life.

Fletcher Rochford had certainly some peculiar temptations to intellectual pride and inordinate self-esteem, but his faith and the daily life he lived "as unto God," kept him in great measure from what would probably otherwise have been his "besetting sins."

Have I made him clear to you—this man of strong, keen, cultivated mind, of warm, and swift, and generous impulses, all that was in him toned, and brightened and mellowed by his vital, fervent Christianity?

In their style of living, the Rochfords were extremely unostentatious. The tastes of the whole family were of that simple, quiet sort which avoids all display. So far as was pos-

sible in a city, they conserved to old home habits and style of living, but there was a fine harmony in the appointments of every room which would have pleased the eyes of an artist. Pictures, bronzes, statuettes, made color and grace everywhere. There was a

dainty bit of a conservatory, where birds sang, the other day that gray hairs were ornamental, and which made a bit of summer through every winter, and pretty brackets in corners, "Then I shall cherish mine. Well, girls, and baskets over which vines and mosses trailed, and paintings, gems of color and bloom, in all sorts of curious little frames, full of suggestion, feeding the eye and elevating the taste into a finer and deeper enjoyment of all the beauty which its Maker's Hand has scattered broadcast upon the world.

"Oh, Fletcher, you don't know, you dear old fellow, half so good it seems to get you back here again!" exclaimed Sicily Rochford, in her pretty, impulsive fashion, as her brother rose up from the table and turned to the mantel to examine a small box of geological specimens, which he had disinterred from some deep of his trunk the night before.

"Does it, my dear girl?" bending down and kissing both cheeks. "I bear you witness, that there has not been a morning nor evening in the whole three hundred and sixty-five in which I have been absent from you, that I have not, in spirit, sat down at this table with you and Angeline."

"And during any one of those three hundred and sixty-five mornings and evenings, if you had walked suddenly in, you would have found plate and napkin laid for you in your old seat as they were this morning," said the elder sister. "We kept that back, though, in all our letters to tell you on your return."

The doctor had removed his spectacles, and there was a sudden flash and melting of his eyes.

"Oh, Angeline!" There was a little pause here. "If you had written me, girls, that, added to all you did say, and my inexpressible longing to see you, I doubt whether I should not have taken the next steamer for home."

"And missed your sail on the Nile and your sight of the Pyramids?" interposed Sicily.

"Even so, for a sight of your dear faces," drawing both of these close together, and holding them within his two palms until the girls exclaimed that he was pinching their cheeks beyond endurance.

"But," said Angeline, "you will never be quite Fletcher himself restored to us until you get rid of some of that tan which makes you look like an East Indian—and oh, Sicily, here is a gray hair!" running up her soft fingers among the thick brown locks.

"It is not the first one, oh, Angeline. You know we come of a race whose locks grow white early."

"Yes, and I read in Godey's Lady's Book

"that it struck me this morning at breakfast as preposterous enough to find that after a whole year's absence, and with so much to hear and tell both on his side and on ours, that we could find nothing better to talk of than the people who live opposite, with whom we have never exchanged a syllable, whose names even we do not know."

"The fact might suggest some interesting discussion in mental philosophy, but we will not enter that field this morning."

"I hope not," said Sicily, making a wry face out of her fair one. "I want you to carry us into physical, not metaphysical, scenery for the present."

He laughed, pinched her cheek, and sat down, running his fingers through his hair, as was a habit of his, and recalling all the passages of his travel in Italy.

Just then Angeline brought her father's Bible, and laid it on her brother's knee.

"We have a double reason to read and give thanks now," she said, her hand dwelling a moment fondly on his shoulder. And he knew that it was for his sake she said it.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)